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PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1954

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The Oppenheimer Case

BERNARD MALAMUD
The Magic Barrel (a story)

IGNAZIO SILONE
A Self-Portrait in Questions and Answers

DAVID PAUL
Time and the Novelist

ROBERT WARSHOW
Chaplin: A Feeling of Sad Dignity

MICHAEL HARRINGTON
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The Follies of Adam (a poem)

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Bernard Malamud

THE MAGIC BARREL

Not long ago there lived in uptown New York, in a small, almost meager room, though crowded with books, Leo Finkle, a rabbinical student in the Yeshivah University. Finkle, after six years of study, was to be ordained in June and had been advised by an acquaintance that he might find it easier to win himself a congregation if he were married. Since he had no present prospects of marriage, after two tormented days of turning it over in his mind, he called in Pinye Salzman, a marriage broker, whose two-line advertisement he had read in the *Forward*.

The matchmaker appeared one night out of the dark fourth-floor hallway of the graystone rooming house, grasping a black, strapped portfolio that had been worn thin with use. Salzman, who had been long in the business, was of slight but dignified build, wearing an old hat and an overcoat too short and tight for him. He smelled frankly of fish, which he loved to eat, and although he was missing a few teeth, his presence was not displeasing, because of an amiable manner curiously contrasted by mournful eyes. His voice, his lips, his wisp of beard, his bony fingers were animated, but give him a moment of repose and his mild blue eyes soon revealed a depth of sadness, a characteristic that put Leo a little at ease although the situation, for him, was inherently tense.

He at once informed Salzman why he had asked him to come, explaining that his home was in Cleveland, and that but for his parents, who had married comparatively late in life, he was alone in the world. He had for six years devoted himself entirely to his studies, as a result of which, quite understandably, he had found himself without time for a social life and the company of young women. Therefore he thought it the better part of trial and error—of em-

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barrassing fumbling—to call in an experienced person to advise him in these matters. He remarked in passing that the function of the marriage broker was ancient and honorable, highly approved in the Jewish community, because it made practical the necessary without hindering joy. Moreover, his own parents had been brought together by a matchmaker. They had made, if not a financially profitable marriage—since neither had possessed any worldly goods to speak of, at least a successful one in the sense of their everlasting devotion to one another. Salzman listened in embarrassed surprise, sensing a sort of apology. Later, however, he experienced a glow of pride in his work, an emotion that had left him years ago, and he heartily approved of Finkle.

The two men went to their business. Leo had led Salzman to the only clear place in the room, a table near a window that overlooked the lamp-lit city. He seated himself at the matchmaker's side but facing him, attempting by an act of will to suppress the unpleasant tickle in his throat. Salzman eagerly unstrapped his portfolio and removed a loose rubber band from a thin packet of much-handled cards. As he flipped through them, a gesture and sound that physically hurt Leo, the student pretended not to see and gazed steadfastly out the window. Although it was still February, winter was on its last legs, signs of which he had for the first time in years begun to notice. He now observed the round white moon, moving high in the sky through a cloud-menagerie, and watched with half-open mouth as it penetrated a huge hen, and dropped out of her like an egg laying itself. Salzman, though pretending through eyeglasses he had just slipped on, to be engaged in scanning the writing on the cards, stole occasional glances at the young man's distinguished face, noting with pleasure the long, severe scholar's nose, brown eyes heavy with learning, sensitive yet ascetic lips, and a certain almost hollow quality of the dark cheeks. He gazed around at shelves upon shelves of books and let out a soft but happy sigh.

When Leo's eyes fell upon the cards, he counted six spread out in Salzman's hand.

"So few?" he said in disappointment.

"You wouldn't believe me how much cards I got in my office," Salzman replied. "The drawers are already filled to the top, so I keep them now in a barrel, but is every girl good for a new rabbi?"

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Leo blushed at this, regretting all he had revealed of himself in a curriculum vitae he had sent to Salzman. He had thought it best to acquaint him with his strict standards and specifications, but in having done so now felt he had told the marriage broker more than was absolutely necessary.

He hesitantly inquired, "Do you keep photographs of your clients on file?"

"First comes family, amount of dowry, also what kind promises," Salzman replied, unbuttoning his tight coat and settling himself in the chair. "After comes pictures, rabbi."

"Call me Mr. Finkle. I'm not a rabbi yet."

Salzman said he would, but instead called him doctor, which he changed to rabbi when Leo was not listening too attentively.

Salzman adjusted his horn-rimmed spectacles, gently cleared his throat and read in an eager voice the contents of the top card:

"Sophie P. Twenty-four years. Widow for one year. No children. Educated high school and two years college. Father promises eight thousand dollars. Has wonderful wholesale business. Also real estate. On the mother's side comes teachers, also one actor. Well known on Second Avenue."

Leo gazed up in surprise, "Did you say a widow?"

"A widow don't mean spoiled, rabbi. She lived with her husband maybe four months. He was a sick boy, she made a mistake to marry him."

"Marrying a widow has never entered my mind."

"This is because you have no experience. A widow, specially if she is young and healthy like this girl, is a wonderful person to marry. She will be thankful to you the rest of her life. Believe me, if I was looking now for a bride, I would marry a widow."

Leo reflected, then shook his head.

Salzman hunched his shoulders in an almost imperceptible gesture of disappointment. He placed the card down on the wooden table and began to read another:

"Lily H. High school teacher. Regular. Not a substitute. Has savings and new Dodge car. Lived in Paris one year. Father is successful dentist thirty-five years. Interested in professional man. Well Americanized family. Wonderful opportunity.

"I know her personally," said Salzman. "I wish you could see

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this girl. She is a doll. Also very intelligent. All day you could talk to her about books and theyater and what not. She also knows current events."

"I don't believe you mentioned her age?"

"Her age?" Salzman said, raising his brows in surprise. "Her age is thirty-two years."

Leo said after a while, "I'm afraid that seems a little too old."

Salzman let out a laugh. "So how old are you, rabbi?"

"Twenty-seven."

"So what is the difference, tell me, between twenty-seven and thirty-two? My own wife is seven years older than me. So what did I suffer? —Nothing. If Rothschild's a daughter wants to marry you, would you say on account her age, no?"

"Yes," Leo said dryly.

Salzman shook off the no in the yes. "Five years don't mean a thing. I give you my word that when you will live with her for one week you will forget her age. What does it mean five years—that she lived more and knows more than somebody who is younger? On this girl, God bless her, years are not wasted. Each one that it comes makes better the bargain."

"What subject does she teach in high school?"

"Languages. If you heard the way she reads French, you will think it is music. I am in the business twenty-five years, and I recommend her with my whole heart. Believe me, I know what I'm talking, rabbi."

"What's on the next card?" Leo said abruptly.

Salzman reluctantly turned up the third card:

"Ruth K. Nineteen years. Honor student. Father offers thirteen thousand dollars cash to the right bridegroom. He is a medical doctor. Stomach specialist with marvelous practice. Brother-in-law owns own garment business. Particular people."

Salzman looked up as if he had read his trump card.

"Did you say nineteen?" Leo asked with interest.

"On the dot."

"Is she attractive?" He blushed. "Pretty?"

Salzman kissed his fingertips. "A little doll. On this I give you my word. Let me call the father tonight and you will see what means pretty."

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But Leo was troubled. "You're sure she's that young?"

"This I am positive. The father will show you the birth certificate."

"Are you positive there isn't something wrong with her?" Leo insisted.

"Who says there is wrong?"

"I don't understand why an American girl her age should go to a marriage broker."

A smile spread over Salzman's face.

"So for the same reason you went, she comes."

Leo flushed. "I am pressed for time."

Salzman, realizing he had been tactless, quickly explained. "The father came, not her. He wants she should have the best, so he looks around himself. When we will locate the right boy he will introduce him and encourage. This makes a better marriage than if a young girl without experience takes for herself. I don't have to tell you this."

"But don't you think this young girl believes in love?" Leo spoke uneasily.

Salzman was about to guffaw but caught himself and said soberly, "Love comes with the right person, not before."

Leo parted dry lips but did not speak. Noticing that Salzman had snatched a quick glance at the next card, he cleverly asked, "How is her health?"

"Perfect," Salzman said, breathing with difficulty. "Of course, she is a little lame on her right foot from an auto accident that it happened to her when she was twelve years, but nobody notices on account she is so brilliant and also beautiful."

Leo got up heavily and went to the window. He felt curiously bitter and upbraided himself for having called in the marriage broker. Finally, he shook his head.

"Why not?" Salzman persisted, the pitch of his voice rising.

"Because I hate stomach specialists."

"So what do you care what is his business? After you marry her, do you need him? Who says he must come every Friday night to your house?"

Ashamed of the way the talk was going, Leo dismissed Salzman, who went home with melancholy eyes.

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Though he had felt only relief at the marriage broker's departure, Leo was in low spirits the next day. He explained it as arising from Salzman's failure to produce a suitable bride for him. He did not care for his type of clientele. But when Leo found himself hesitating over whether to seek out another matchmaker, one more polished than Pinye, he wondered if it could be—his protestations to the contrary, and although he honored his father and mother—that he did not, in essence, care for the matchmaking institution? This thought he quickly put out of mind yet found himself still upset. All day he ran around in a fog—missed an important appointment, forgot to give out his laundry, walked out of a Broadway cafeteria without paying and had to run back with the ticket in his hand; had even not recognized his landlady in the street when she passed with a friend and courteously called out, "A good evening to you, Doctor Finkle." By nightfall, however, he had regained sufficient calm to sink his nose into a book and there found peace from his thoughts.

Almost at once there came a knock on the door. Before Leo could say enter, Salzman, commercial cupid, was standing in the room. His face was gray and meager, his expression hungry, and he looked as if he would expire on his feet. Yet the marriage broker managed, by some trick of the muscles, to display a broad smile.

"So good evening. I am invited?"

Leo nodded, disturbed to see him again, yet unwilling to ask him to leave.

Beaming still, Salzman laid his portfolio on the table. "Rabbi, I got for you tonight good news."

"I've asked you not to call me rabbi. I'm still a student."

"Your worries are finished. I have for you a first-class bride."

"Leave me in peace concerning this subject." Leo pretended lack of interest.

"The world will dance at your wedding."

"Please, Mr. Salzman, no more."

"But first must come back my strength," Salzman said weakly. He fumbled with the portfolio straps and took out of the leather case an oily paper bag, from which he extracted a hard seeded roll and a small smoked white fish. With one motion of his hand he stripped the fish out of its skin and began ravenously to chew. "All day in a rush," he muttered.

Leo watched him eat.

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"A sliced tomato you have maybe?" Salzman hesitantly inquired.

"No."

The marriage broker shut his eyes and ate. When he had finished he carefully cleaned up the crumbs and rolled up the remains of the fish in the paper bag. His spectacled eyes roamed the room until he discovered, amid some piles of books, a one-burner gas stove. Lifting his hat he humbly asked, "A glass tea you got, rabbi?"

Conscience-stricken, Leo rose and brewed the tea. He served it with a chunk of lemon and two cubes of lump sugar, delighting Salzman.

After he had drunk his tea, Salzman's strength and good spirits were restored.

"So tell me, rabbi," he said amiably, "you considered any more the three clients I mentioned yesterday?"

"There was no need to consider."

"Why not?"

"None of them suits me."

"What, then, suits you?"

Leo let it pass because he could give only a confused answer.

Without waiting for a reply, Salzman asked, "You remember this girl I talked to you—the high-school teacher?"

"Age thirty-two?"

But, surprisingly, Salzman's face lit in a smile. "Age twenty-nine."

Leo shot him a look. "Reduced from thirty-two?"

"A mistake," Salzman avowed. "I talked today with the dentist. He took me to his safety deposit box and showed me the birth certificate. She was twenty-nine years last August. They made her a party in the mountains where she went for her vacation. When her father spoke to me the first time I forgot to write the age and I told you thirty-two, but now I remember this was a different client, a widow."

"The same one you told me about? I thought she was twenty-four?"

"A different. Am I responsible that the world is filled with widows?"

"No, but I'm not interested in them, nor for that matter, in schoolteachers."

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Salzman passionately pulled his clasped hands to his breast. Looking at the ceiling he exclaimed, "Jewish children, what can I say to somebody that he is not interested in high-school teachers? So what then you are interested?"

Leo flushed but controlled himself.

"In who else you will be interested," Salzman went on, "if you not interested in this fine girl that she speaks four languages and has personally in the bank ten thousand dollars? Also her father guarantees further twelve thousand. Also she has a new car, wonderful clothes, talks on all subjects, and she will give you a first-class home and children. How near do we come in our life to paradise?"

"If she's so wonderful, why wasn't she married ten years ago?"

"Why?" said Salzman with a heavy laugh. "—Why? Because she is *partikler*. This is why. She wants only the *best*."

Leo was silent, amused at how he had trapped himself. But Salzman had aroused his interest in Lily H., and he began seriously to consider calling on her. When the marriage broker observed how intently Leo's mind was at work on the facts he had supplied, he felt positive they would soon come to an agreement.

Late Saturday afternoon, conscious of Salzman, Leo Finkle walked with Lily Hirschorn along Riverside Drive. He walked briskly and erectly, wearing with distinction the black fedora he had that morning taken with trepidation out of the dusty hatbox on his closet shelf, and the heavy black Saturday coat he had thoroughly whisked clean. Leo also owned a walking stick, a present from a distant relative, but had decided not to use it. Lily, petite and not unpretty, had on something signifying the approach of spring. She was *au courant*, animatedly, with all subjects, and he weighed her words and found her surprisingly sound—score another for Salzman, whom he uneasily sensed to be somewhere around, hiding perhaps high in a tree along the street, flashing the lady signals; or perhaps a cloven-hoofed Pan, piping nuptial ditties as he danced his invisible way before them, strewing wild buds on the walk and purple summer grapes in their path, symbolizing fruit of a union, of which there was yet none.

Lily startled Leo by remarking, "I was thinking of Mr. Salzman, a curious figure, wouldn't you say?"

Not certain what to answer, he nodded.

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She bravely went on, blushing, "I for one am grateful for his introducing us. Aren't you?"

He courteously replied, "I am."

"I mean," she said with a little laugh—and it was all in good taste, or at least gave the effect of being not in bad—"do you mind that we came together so?"

He was not afraid of her honesty, recognizing that she meant to set the relationship aright, and understanding that it took a certain amount of experience in life, and courage, to want to do it quite that way. One had to have some sort of past to make that kind of beginning.

He said that he did not mind. Salzman's function was traditional and honorable—valuable for what it might achieve, which, he pointed out, was frequently nothing.

Lily agreed with a sigh. They walked on for a while and she said after a long silence, again with a nervous laugh, "Would you mind if I asked you something a little bit personal? Frankly, I find the subject fascinating." Although Leo shrugged, she went on half embarrassedly, "How was it that you came to your calling? I mean, was it a sudden passionate inspiration?"

Leo, after a time, slowly replied, "I was always interested in the Law."

"You saw revealed in it the presence of the Highest?"

He nodded and changed the subject. "I understand you spent a little time in Paris, Miss Hirschorn?"

"Oh, did Mr. Salzman tell you, Rabbi Finkle?" Leo winced but she went on, "It was ages and ages ago and almost forgotten. I remember I had to return for my sister's wedding."

But Lily would not be put off. "When," she asked in a trembly voice, "did you become enamored of God?"

He stared at her. Then it came to him that she was talking not about Leo Finkle, but a total stranger, some mystical figure, perhaps even passionate prophet that Salzman had conjured up for her—no relation to the living or dead. Leo trembled with rage and weakness. The trickster had obviously sold her a bill of goods, just as he had him, who'd expected to become acquainted with a young lady of twenty-nine, only to behold, the moment he laid eyes upon her strained and anxious face, a woman past thirty-five and aging

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very rapidly. Only his self-control, he thought, had kept him this long in her presence.

"I am not," he said gravely, "a talented religious person," and in seeking words to go on, found himself possessed by fear and shame. "I think," he said in a strained manner, "that I came to God not because I loved Him, but because I did not."

This confession he spoke harshly because its unexpectedness shook him.

Lily wilted. Leo saw a profusion of loaves of bread sailing like ducks high over his head, not unlike the loaves by which he had counted himself to sleep last night. Mercifully, then, it snowed, which he would not put past Salzman's machinations.

He was infuriated with the marriage broker and swore he would throw him out of the room the moment he reappeared. But Salzman did not come that night, and when Leo's anger had subsided, an unaccountable despair grew in its place. At first he thought this was caused by his disappointment in Lily, but before long it became evident that he had involved himself with Salzman without a true knowledge of his own intent. He gradually realized—with an emptiness that seized him with six hands—that he had called in the broker to find him a bride because he was incapable of doing it himself. This terrifying insight he had derived as a result of his meeting and conversation with Lily Hirschorn. Her probing questions had somehow irritated him into revealing—to himself more than her—the true nature of his relationship with God, and from that it had come upon him, with shocking force, that apart from his parents, he had never loved anyone. Or perhaps it went the other way, that he did not love God so well as he might, because he had not loved man. It seemed to Leo that his whole life stood starkly revealed and he saw himself, for the first time, as he truly was—unloved and loveless. This bitter but somehow not fully unexpected revelation brought him to a point of panic controlled only by extraordinary effort. He covered his face with his hands and wept.

The week that followed was the worst of his life. He did not eat, and lost weight. His beard darkened and grew ragged. He stopped attending lectures and seminars and almost never opened a book. He seriously considered leaving the Yeshivah, although he was

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deeply troubled at the thought of the loss of all his years of study—saw them like pages from a book strewn over the city—and at the devastating effect of this decision upon his parents. But he had lived without knowledge of himself, and never in the Five Books and all the Commentaries—mea culpa—had the truth been revealed to him. He did not know where to turn, and in all this desolating loneliness there was no *to whom,* although he often thought of Lily but not once could bring himself to go downstairs and make the call. He became touchy and irritable, especially with his landlady, who asked him all manner of questions; on the other hand, sensing his own disagreeableness, he waylaid her on the stairs and apologized abjectly, until mortified, she ran from him. Out of this, however, he drew the consolation that he was yet a Jew and that a Jew suffered. But gradually, as the long and terrible week drew to a close, he regained his composure and some idea of purpose in life: to go on as planned. Although he was imperfect, the ideal was not. As for his quest of a bride, the thought of continuing afflicted him with anxiety and heartburn, yet perhaps with this new knowledge of himself he would be more successful than in the past. Perhaps love would now come to him and a bride to that love. And for this sanctified seeking who needed a Salzman?

The marriage broker, a skeleton with haunted eyes, returned that very night. He looked, withal, the picture of frustrated expectancy—as if he had steadfastly waited the week at Miss Lily Hirschorn's side for a telephone call that never came.

Casually coughing, Salzman came immediately to the point: "So how did you like her?"

Leo's anger rose and he could not refrain from chiding the matchmaker: "Why did you lie to me, Salzman?"

Salzman's pale face went dead white, as if the world had snowed on him.

"Did you not state that she was twenty-nine?" Leo insisted.

"I give you my word—"

"She was thirty-five. *At least* thirty-five."

"Of this I would not be too sure. Her father told me—"

"Never mind. The worst of it was that you lied to her."

"How did I lie to her, tell me?"

"You told her things about me that weren't true. You made me

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out to be more, consequently less than I am. She had in mind a totally different person, a sort of semi-mystical Wonder Rabbi."

"All I said, you was a religious man."

"I can imagine."

Salzman sighed. "This is my weakness that I have," he confessed. "My wife says to me I shouldn't be a salesman, but when I have two fine people that they would be wonderful to be married, I am so happy that I talk too much." He smiled wanly. "This is why Salzman is a poor man."

Leo's anger went. "Well, Salzman, I'm afraid that's all."

The marriage broker fastened hungry eyes on him.

"You don't want any more a bride?"

"I do," said Leo, "but I have decided to seek her in a different way. I am no longer interested in an arranged marriage. To be frank, I now admit the necessity of premarital love. That is, I want to be in love with the one I marry."

"Love?" said Salzman, astounded. After a moment he said, "For us, our love is our life, not for the ladies. In the ghetto they—"

"I know, I know," said Leo. "I've thought of it often. Love, I have said to myself, should be a by-product of living and worship rather than its own end. Yet for myself I find it necessary to establish the level of my need and to fulfill it."

Salzman shrugged but answered, "Listen, rabbi, if you want love, this I can find for you also. I have such beautiful clients that you will love them the minute your eyes will see them."

Leo smiled unhappily. "I'm afraid you don't understand."

But Salzman hastily unstrapped his portfolio and withdrew a manila packet from it.

"Pictures," he said, quickly laying the envelope on the table.

Leo called after him to take the pictures away, but as if on the wings of the wind, Salzman had disappeared.

March came. Leo had returned to his regular routine. Although he felt not quite himself yet—lacked energy—he was making plans for a more active social life. Of course it would cost something, but he was an expert in cutting corners; and when there were no corners left he could make circles rounder. All the while Salzman's pictures had lain on the table, gathering dust. Occasionally as Leo sat study-

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ing, or enjoying a cup of tea, his eyes fell on the manila envelope, but he never opened it.

The days went by and no social life to speak of developed with a member of the opposite sex—it was difficult, given the circumstances of his situation. One morning Leo toiled up the stairs to his room and stared out the window at the city. Although the day was bright his view of it was dark. For some time he watched the people in the street below hurrying along and then turned with a heavy heart to his little room. On the table was the packet. With a sudden relentless gesture he tore it open. For a half-hour he stood there, in a state of excitement, examining the photographs of the ladies Salzman had included. Finally, with a deep sigh he put them down. There were six, of varying degrees of attractiveness, but look at them long enough and they all became Lily Hirschorn: all past their prime, all starved behind bright smiles, not a true personality in the lot. Life, despite their anguished struggles and frantic yoohooings, had passed them by; they were photographs in a briefcase that stank of fish. After a while, however, as Leo attempted to return the pictures into the envelope, he found another in it, a small snapshot of the type taken by a machine for a quarter. He gazed at it a moment and let out a cry.

Her face deeply moved him. Why, he could at first not say. It gave him the impression of youth—all spring flowers, yet age—a sense of having been used to the bone, wasted; this all came from the eyes, which were hauntingly familiar, yet absolutely strange. He had a strong impression that he had met her before, but try as he might he could not place her, although he could almost recall her name, as if he had read it written in her own handwriting. No, this couldn't be; he would have remembered her. It was not, he affirmed, that she had an extraordinary beauty—no, although her face was attractive enough; it was that *something* about her moved him. Feature for feature, even some of the ladies of the photographs could do better; but she leaped forth to the heart—had lived, or wanted to—more than just wanted, perhaps regretted it—had somehow deeply suffered: it could be seen in the depths of those reluctant eyes, and from the way the light enclosed and shone from her, and within her, opening whole realms of possibility: this was her own. Her he desired. His head ached and eyes narrowed with the intensity of his

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gazing, then, as if a black fog had blown up in the mind, he experienced fear of her and was aware that he had received an impression, somehow, of filth. He shuddered, saying softly, it is thus with us all. Leo brewed some tea in a small pot and sat sipping it, without sugar, to calm himself. But before he had finished drinking, again with excitement he examined the face and found it good: good for him. Only such a one could truly understand Leo Finkle and help him to seek whatever he was seeking. How she had come to be among the discards in Salzman's barrel he could never guess, but he knew he must urgently go find her.

Leo rushed downstairs, grabbed up the Bronx telephone book, and searched for Salzman's home address. He was not listed, nor was his office. Neither was he in the Manhattan book. But Leo remembered having written down the address on a slip of paper after he had read Salzman's advertisement in the "personals" column of the *Forward*. He ran up to his room and tore through his papers, without luck. It was exasperating. Just when he needed the matchmaker he was nowhere to be found. Fortunately Leo remembered to look in his wallet. There on a card he found his name written and a Bronx address. No phone number was listed, which, Leo now recalled, was the reason he had originally communicated with Salzman by letter. He got on his coat, put a hat on over his skull cap and hurried to the subway station. All the way to the far end of the Bronx he sat on the edge of his seat. He was more than once tempted to take out the picture and see if the girl's face was as he remembered it, but he refrained, allowing the snapshot to remain in his inside coat pocket, content to have her so close. When the train pulled into the station he was waiting at the door and bolted out. He quickly located the street Salzman had advertised.

The building he sought was less than a block from the subway, but it was not an office building, nor even a loft, nor a store in which one could rent office space. It was an old and grimy tenement. Leo found Salzman's name in pencil on a soiled tag under the bell and climbed three dark flights to his apartment. When he knocked, the door was opened by a thin, asthmatic, gray-haired woman, in felt slippers.

"Yes?" she said, expecting nothing. She listened without listening. He could have sworn he had seen her somewhere before but knew it was illusion.

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"Salzman—does he live here? Pinye Salzman," he said, "the matchmaker?"

She stared at him a long time. "Of course."

He felt embarrassed. "Is he in?"

"No." Her mouth was open, but she offered nothing more.

"This is urgent. Can you tell me where his office is?"

"In the air." She pointed upward.

"You mean he has no office?" Leo said.

"In his socks."

He peered into the apartment. It was sunless and dingy, one large room divided by a half-open curtain, beyond which he could see a sagging metal bed. The nearer side of the room was crowded with rickety chairs, old bureaus, a three-legged table, racks of cooking utensils, and all the apparatus of a kitchen. But there was no sign of Salzman or his magic barrel, probably also a figment of his imagination. An odor of frying fish made Leo weak to the knees.

"Where is he?" he insisted. "I've got to see your husband."

At length she answered, "So who knows where he is? Every time he thinks a new thought he runs to a different place. Go home, he will find you."

"Tell him Leo Finkle."

She gave no sign that she had heard.

He went downstairs, deeply depressed.

But Salzman, breathless, stood waiting at his door.

Leo was overjoyed and astounded. "How did you get here before me?"

"I rushed."

"Come inside."

They entered. Leo fixed tea and a sardine sandwich for Salzman.

As they were drinking he reached behind him for the packet of pictures and handed them to the marriage broker.

Salzman put down his glass and said expectantly, "You found maybe somebody you like?"

"Not among these."

The marriage broker turned sad eyes away.

"Here's the one I like." Leo held forth the snapshot.

Salzman slipped on his glasses and took the picture into his trembling hand. He turned ghastly and let out a miserable groan.

"What's the matter?" cried Leo.

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"Excuse me. Was an accident this picture. She is not for you."

Salzman frantically shoved the manila packet into his portfolio. He thrust the snapshot into his pocket and fled down the stairs.

Leo, after momentary paralysis, gave chase and cornered the marriage broker in the vestibule. The landlady made hysterical outcries but neither of them listened.

"Give me back the picture, Salzman."

"No." The pain in his eyes was terrible.

"Tell me who she is then."

"This I can't tell you. Excuse me."

He made to depart, but Leo, forgetting himself, seized the matchmaker by his tight coat and shook him frenziedly.

"Please," sighed Salzman. "*Please.*"

Leo ashamedly let him go. "Tell me who she is," he begged. "It's very important for me to know."

"She is not for you. She is a wild one—wild, without shame. This is not a bride for a rabbi."

"What do you mean wild?"

"Like an animal. Like a dog. For her to be poor was a sin. This is why she is dead now."

"In God's name, what do you mean?"

"Her I can't introduce to you," Salzman cried.

"Why are you so excited?"

"Why he asks," Salzman said, bursting into tears. "This is my baby, my Stella, she should burn in hell."

Leo hurried up to bed and hid under the covers. Under the covers he thought his whole life through. Although he soon fell asleep he could not sleep her out of his mind. He woke, beating his breast. Though he prayed to be rid of her, his prayers went unanswered. Through days of torment he struggled endlessly not to love her; fearing success, he escaped it. He then concluded to convert her to goodness, himself to God. The idea alternately nauseated and exalted him.

He perhaps did not know that he had come to a final decision until he encountered Salzman in a Broadway cafeteria. He was sitting alone at a rear table, sucking the bony remains of a fish. The marriage broker appeared haggard, and transparent to the point of vanishing.

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Salzman looked up at first without recognizing him. Leo had grown a pointed beard and his eyes were weighted with wisdom.

"Salzman," he said, "love has at last come to my heart."

"Who can love from a picture?" mocked the marriage broker.

"It is not impossible."

"If you can love her, then you can love anybody. Let me show you some new clients that they just sent me their photographs. One is a little doll."

"Just her I want," Leo murmured.

"Don't be a fool, doctor. Don't bother with her."

"Put me in touch with her, Salzman," Leo said humbly. "Perhaps I can do her a service."

Salzman had stopped chewing, and Leo understood with emotion that it was now arranged.

Leaving the cafeteria, he was, however, afflicted by a tormenting suspicion that Salzman had planned it all to happen this way.

Leo was informed by letter that she would meet him on a certain corner, and she was there one spring night, waiting under a street lamp. He appeared, carrying a small bouquet of violets and rosebuds, Stella stood by the lamp post, smoking. She wore white with red shoes, which fitted his expectations, although in a troubled moment he had imagined the dress red, and only the shoes white. She waited uneasily and shyly. From afar he saw that her eyes—clearly her father's—were filled with desperate innocence. He pictured, in hers, his own redemption. Violins and lit candles revolved in the sky. Leo ran forward with the flowers outthrust.

Around the corner, Salzman, leaning against a wall, chanted prayers for the dead.

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Diana Trilling

THE OPPENHEIMER CASE: A READING OF THE TESTIMONY

Between June 2, 1954, when the Gray Board announced its findings in the Oppenheimer case, and June 30, when the Atomic Energy Commission published its decision not to grant clearance to Dr. Oppenheimer, the transcript of Dr. Oppenheimer's lengthy hearings before the Gray Board was unexpectedly released to the public.[1] A gigantic volume, some thousand oversized pages of minute type, it is a document which asks for untold hours of close reading. Yet no one who has not studied it carefully can properly evaluate the final verdict which was passed upon Dr. Oppenheimer. It is not only that the evidence on the specific charges put forward by the Atomic Energy Commission cannot be assessed without recourse to the record. Even more important, it is impossible to form a sound judgment of Dr. Oppenheimer's situation without acquaintance with at least what the transcript tells us of the highly complicated context in which these charges were raised and explored.

First, there is the adversary nature of the hearings themselves. No loyalty inquiry is a trial, but neither was this inquiry a neutral investigation in which the Atomic Energy Commission, having been apprised of certain derogatory information about one of its employees, undertook to the best of its ability to command the whole evidence of his guilt or innocence. I am not implying that Dr. Oppenheimer was not given his full day in court—he most surely was. I am merely calling attention to the fact that the approach of the Atomic Energy Commission to the case was that of a prosecution. For instance, while all the defense witnesses appeared voluntarily or perhaps at the request of Dr. Oppenheimer's counsel, all the witnesses against Dr. Op-

1 *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer: Transcript of Hearing Before Personnel Security Board* may be purchased for $2.75 by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.

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penheimer appeared by order of the Commission or of their superior officers in government service. That is, the Commission concerned itself to produce only such testimony as would help prove that Dr. Oppenheimer should be refused clearance. And Mr. Robb, lawyer for the Commission, addressed himself to the case entirely in this adversary spirit: it was his effort to elicit from his witnesses not the whole truth, whichever side it might serve, but solely such evidence as would discredit the defense. Ruthless and brilliant, Mr. Robb was a prosecuting attorney with a single-minded purpose, to achieve Dr. Oppenheimer's defeat.

In addition, the procedure employed in the hearings gave a large advantage to the Commission. In a trial, the prosecution would have to state its case first and the burden of proof would lie with it. In this inquiry, as, I gather, in all loyalty hearings, the defense bore the burden of proof. The defense was on the stand first and had to make its case without exact knowledge of the evidence that might be produced against it. Counsel for the Commission had access to all government files and documents, including Dr. Oppenheimer's own files from the period of his government service, and was allowed to produce them at will without first acquainting the defense with their existence and content. Then, when Dr. Oppenheimer's lawyers raised the conventional legal objections to this procedure, they were made to seem unfriendly, even petulant and unreasonable: friendliness was demanded only of their side. Repeatedly and humiliatingly, Mr. Garrison and Mr. Silverman were reminded of the many courtesies to which they were responding with an insufficient gratitude.

The courtesies were of course there. It is not to be denied that Mr. Gray, as Chairman of the Board, not only made constant scrupulous reference to the rules under which the Board operated but was also explicitly conscious of the desirability of a certain generosity to the defense. In essence, however, the procedural framework within which the Board worked made a mockery of courtesy—or so it seems to the reader like myself who has no legal training. It is also my impression that, for all his rather too-elaborate caution, Mr. Gray did not always succeed in rising above the ambiguous circumstances in which he had been placed. The procedural latitude permitted him by the legally unconventional circumstances of the inquiry inevitably licensed a large play of his personality, and almost from the start of

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the hearings there appears a certain note of moral advantage in Mr. Gray's dealings with the defense which is not to be heard in his dealings with Mr. Robb. This unfortunate tone intensifies with the passage of the days until, near the close of the sessions, when Dr. Vannevar Bush is recalled as a rebuttal witness, Mr. Gray not only allows Mr. Robb to badger Dr. Bush as if he were a witness in a criminal trial but himself so far exceeds the situation as to address a distinguished member of the community as if he were a schoolboy.

As the Chairman, Mr. Gray was the most exposed member of the Board. The behavior of the other two members must be differently characterized. Mr. Morgan spoke scarcely a word throughout the inquiry; we know him only through the majority opinion in which he concurred. As to Dr. Evans, his questions and remarks are hardly the more cogent for so obviously proceeding from a struggling mind and heart. His often comic and touching awkwardness before the momentous problem he is asked to consider are not reflected in his minority report, but they must be taken to account for its weakness.

No doubt it was necessary to have a scientist on the Board, and manifestly it must have been difficult to find a reputable member of the profession, other than Dr. Evans, who was sufficiently remote from the persons and issues in the controversy to qualify as without bias. For this is another, and surely the most significant, element in Dr. Oppenheimer's investigation which cannot be appreciated without knowledge of the record—the professional in-fighting involved in it.

Thirty-nine witnesses appeared for and against Dr. Oppenheimer in the hearings and gave many long hours of testimony. Of the thirty-nine, only his wife was not professionally concerned in the affairs which concerned Dr. Oppenheimer. All the rest were either themselves scientists who had worked on government programs which also involved Dr. Oppenheimer, or military or other official persons closely connected with the scientific-military projects and policies which have engaged Dr. Oppenheimer over the last eleven years—in this latter group I include, of course, security officers who had had dealings with him, and government officials like Mr. Lilienthal and former Ambassador Kennan. There were no nonprofessional friends and acquaintances such as even the most dedicated man of science must

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number in his circle. There were no associates from the days of Dr. Oppenheimer's admitted Communist sympathies. (Curiously enough, Haakon Chevalier, who figures so largely in one of the major charges against Dr. Oppenheimer, was never called by either side.) Of the thirty-eight witnesses other than Mrs. Oppenheimer, only the three or four security officers had not either worked for or with Dr. Oppenheimer, or made policy with him, or tried to make policy in opposition to his views, or been professionally affirmed or hampered by his scientific-political attitudes. And even the security officers, having once had to formulate judgment on him, had positions to defend.

And this is to speak only of the witnesses we confront directly and not of the crucial part which, we learn, must have been played in Dr. Oppenheimer's case by persons who are never presented in the inquiry—Roosevelt, Truman, Senator MacMahon, General Vandenberg, General Doolittle, Air Force Secretary Finletter, Acheson, Bernard Baruch, Commissioner Strauss, Commissioner Murray: to name some of the most notable of them—and by professional groups who have no official spokesman before the Board. Even in advance of the hearings one had heard of considerable conflict between Admiral Strauss, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Dr. Oppenheimer on the H-bomb issue and one had naturally assumed that Dr. Oppenheimer's situation involved disagreements at high policy levels. What the record adds to such elementary information while still leaving one with the conviction that the full inside story of the Oppenheimer case has not even begun to be disclosed and may indeed never be known to the public, is the realization that it was not alone one grave policy-conflict in which Dr. Oppenheimer was caught but a whole vast tangle of personal, professional and political animosities. The conflict between the H-bomb proponents and the H-bomb opponents is undoubtedly the climax of dissension but we cannot fail to be aware of the multitude of alignments and groupings, commitments and cross-purposes, all of which are unmistakably bound up with Dr. Oppenheimer's predicament. The scientific "ins" versus the scientific "outs," the friends of Dr. Oppenheimer versus the friends of Dr. Teller, the military versus the academics, the Air Force versus the Army and versus the Navy, the Strategic Air Command versus the Air Defense Command, Los Alamos versus Livermore, MIT versus the University of Chicago, Dr. Oppenheimer the individual

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versus individuals of a dramatically different disposition of mind—scarcely a witness appears before the Board whose testimony does not point to one or more of the myriad oppositions whose existence and resolution must surely have been decisive in Dr. Oppenheimer's fate.

As good an example as any is the testimony of David Tressel Griggs, a geophysicist and witness for the Commission, who was chief scientific consultant to the Air Force and a close associate of Air Force Secretary Finletter from the fall of 1951 through June of 1952—the period in which Dr. Oppenheimer is accused by the Commission's witnesses of having in various ways demonstrated his advocacy of a military program that concentrated on continental defense at the sacrifice of our striking power against a foreign enemy, and of having failed to support a second laboratory, in addition to Los Alamos, for thermonuclear research but, instead, put his influence on the side of such enterprises as the Lincoln Summer Study which concerned itself with defensive warning systems and antisubmarine warfare. We do not have to assess the merit or lack of merit in a defensive military policy or even determine whether this is an accurate description of Dr. Oppenheimer's position—actually it is not—to recognize that if Mr. Griggs *thought* this was Dr. Oppenheimer's emphasis he would naturally and immediately be worried by its threat to the prestige of the Air Force. And if Mr. Griggs is quick to testify that the reason he watched Dr. Oppenheimer's views so closely was because both General Vandenberg and Mr. Finletter had told him that they had serious question of Oppenheimer's loyalty, he is equally unhesitant to discuss the more pressing cause for his worry about the Lincoln Summer Study. Himself an Air Force man, Mr. Griggs was deeply concerned because the Summer Study was being promoted and participated in by people who did not share his allegiance to that branch of the service. He was worried because the way it was being administered suggested the unhappy possibility that it might venture into such matters as budgetary allocation between the Strategic Air Command and the Air Defense Command and that its results might be reported directly to the National Security Council instead of to his chiefs. He was deeply disturbed that despite the fact that the Lincoln Project, of which the Study was a kind of offshoot, took 80 to 90 percent of its financial support from the Air Force, the Study planned in part to devote itself to submarine warfare.

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But this barely suggests the nature of the professional and personal biases involved in Dr. Oppenheimer's case as they reveal themselves in the testimony of only a single witness. For example, there is the moment when Mr. Griggs is being cross-examined about the membership of a certain State Department panel with whose recommendations he differed. Citing the minutes of the panel as the source of his information, first Mr. Griggs mentions "Dr. Oppenheimer, Dr. DuBridge, Dr. Bush and others" as members. Asked to repeat the names, he mentions "Dr. Oppenheimer, Dr. DuBridge, Dr. Conant and others." (These are all, of course, defense witnesses.) Asked to repeat the names yet again, this time Mr. Griggs omits Dr. Conant's name and, questioned about the omission, acknowledges that his memory is not clear. Finally he is confronted with the information that Dr. DuBridge was not a member and that there are no minutes of the panel. As I shall presently indicate, Dr. Oppenheimer's own memory is no less fallible than Mr. Griggs's, though there will be an observable difference between the kind of judgment passed on Dr. Oppenheimer for his mistakes of recollection and the kind passed on Mr. Griggs for his. It is the pattern of error in Mr. Griggs's faulty memory that I call attention to here. Because the conclusions of the panel were of a sort with which he did not agree, Mr. Griggs gives the panel a composition of the sort with which he would not agree—the sort like Dr. DuBridge and Dr. Conant who could be presumed to have opinions like Dr. Oppenheimer's.

Or there is Mr. Griggs's testimony, under oath, that it was Dr. Zacharias (who initiated the Lincoln Summer Study) who told him what patently is a grave distortion of Dr. Oppenheimer's position, that Dr. Oppenheimer advocated giving up the Strategic Air Arm for the sake of world peace and, too, that it was Dr. Zacharias who wrote on the blackboard of a public meeting the letters ZORC to indicate that Zacharias, Oppenheimer, Rabi and Charles Lauritsen were in such agreement that they could be thought of in this cabalistic form. Not only does Dr. Zacharias, also under oath, deny the fact that he ever wrote these letters on a blackboard but, of the fifty to a hundred persons supposedly present at the meeting, not one is produced by the prosecution to support Mr. Griggs's testimony.

Or there is Mr. Griggs's disconcerting evidence that in conversations with Commissioner Murray, Murray confirmed his suspicion

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that road blocks were being put in the way of a second laboratory by Dr. Oppenheimer. One of Dr. Oppenheimer's final judges, Commissioner Murray was also—we keep it in mind—among the persons who launched the present investigation of Dr. Oppenheimer's loyalty. While there are witnesses for the defense, such as Mr. Gordon Dean or General McCormack Jr. or Professor Von Neumann of Princeton, who disagreed with Dr. Oppenheimer about the H-bomb but who yet firmly believe in his loyalty, there is not a single witness for the Commission who favored a second laboratory for H-bomb research who is also not flatly in the anti-Oppenheimer camp. The inference to be drawn must be obvious as to where at least this one of his judges stood in relation to Dr. Oppenheimer even before the hearings were held.

That, with this much *parti-pris,* there should be any objectivity at all on the part of the witnesses is, I suppose, a miracle. That, as I have indicated, the miracle occurs only among the witnesses for the defense is not surprising in view of their generally superior human quality. The reader must be warned, of course, against confusing amenity with disinterestedness. Still, style is its own form of morality and if the style of the defense witnesses—their taste and intellectual manners; the informing tone of their testimony—is by so much more impressive than the style of the Commission's witnesses, this cannot be dismissed as without bearing on their credibility. On Dr. Oppenheimer's side, there is no one guilty of behavior like that, say, of Dr. Teller who, of all Dr. Oppenheimer's opponents, has most to gain in public prestige from Dr. Oppenheimer's downfall but who yet can permit himself to agree with the suggestion of Mr. Robb that Dr. Oppenheimer could go fishing for the rest of his life without being missed! There is no one, among the defense witnesses, to balance out the ugly impression left by the appearance of Mr. Borden for the purpose of reading into the record the letter he wrote to the FBI—a copy of which was received by the Atomic Energy Commission shortly before it suspended Dr. Oppenheimer's clearance—in which, without a shred of evidence to support it, Mr. Borden announced his opinion that Dr. Oppenheimer was a spy. Mr. Borden's letter includes this extraordinary statement: "While J. Robert Oppenheimer has not made major contributions to the advancement of science, he holds a respected professional standing among the

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second rank of American physicists." In an opposition of such low quality inevitably we remark a bottom-dog hostility which may once have been matched by the top-dog arrogance which we hear ascribed to Dr. Oppenheimer. But hostility intimates, as arrogance never does, a motivation too personal to be trusted. And if indeed Dr. Oppenheimer was once arrogant, this is no longer observable in the record. Perhaps he has been much chastened, but now all we read in his behavior is a decent pride.

Of course in any society, and particularly in our own, a distinction like Dr. Oppenheimer's is not easily borne, not even by the person who is himself so generously endowed—there is more than a trace of apology for his unique gifts in Dr. Oppenheimer's autobiographical letter in reply to Mr. Nichols' letter of notification suspending his clearance. It is expectable enough that the witnesses who appear at the inquiry on Dr. Oppenheimer's behalf are themselves, most of them, greatly distinguished men well known far beyond their own professions—Vannevar Bush, James Conant, Gordon Dean, Oliver Buckley, K. T. Compton, John J. McCloy, ex-Ambassador Kennan, Fermi, Rabi, Von Neumann. But what is no less expectable, I suppose, and yet peculiarly dismaying is the fact that Dr. Oppenheimer's personal powers, his influence on his associates and his persuasiveness, are offered by those who oppose him as supporting evidence of his dangerousness to the national security, and especially as we come to see the degree to which the investigation of his loyalty rests, not so much on factual evidence, as on interpretation—and I mean interpretation by the witnesses as well as by the judges: there is scarcely a witness in the hearings who does not tell us what Dr. Oppenheimer must have been thinking or what he would necessarily think under given circumstances. In Dr. Oppenheimer's situation, that is, the unhappier human motives are not merely a comment on the human disposition but also an important clue to the nature of the dilemma.

As I say, one had heard reports of a sharp cleavage between Commissioner Strauss and Dr. Oppenheimer on the H-bomb decision. One had even heard that the loyalty charge against Dr. Oppenheimer had been revived by powerful adversaries in and around the Atomic Energy Commission in order to destroy his power.

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Rumor is now given most uncomfortable substance as we study the record and begin to understand the kind of interest Dr. Oppenheimer challenged, both as a personality and a policy-maker, and the strength of personal and professional feeling which might very well have dictated his elimination from the scientific-military community. After all, the fact of Dr. Oppenheimer's past association with Communist activities was hardly news in 1953 and '54. It was no news even in 1943, when Dr. Oppenheimer was put in charge of Los Alamos. And the record frequently reminds us that in 1947 there was another loyalty check-up on him, and Dr. Oppenheimer was cleared by the Atomic Energy Commission. Yet now, more than six years later, his case is reopened and not on the basis of significant new evidence against him—most of what is new and significant that can now be charged against Dr. Oppenheimer was discovered or established in the hearings and was not sufficiently known to the Commission to have compelled a reinvestigation—but, at best, on the basis of making security doubly sure according to the latest security rulings. Inevitably, seeking an explanation of why what might have been handled as a routine check-up was launched like a full-scale man-hunt, we are returned to the history of the last six years of scientific-military development in the United States and, most crucially, to the year 1949 when our scientific-military community broke into the two warring camps which would seem now to have met in final battle.

It was in the fall of 1949, we remember, that Russia exploded an A-bomb and that a group of distinguished physicists, Dr. Teller chief among them, immediately sprang into action with a program for pursuit of a super weapon with which to outdistance the Soviet Union. They were supported by a certain section of the academic world and certain branches and persons in the military and in Government. On the other side, opposed to a crash program for the H-bomb, was a group of scientists of whom Dr. Oppenheimer is described as "the most experienced, most powerful and most effective"; this group also had the support of certain government persons. Dr. Oppenheimer was then Chairman of the General Advisory Committee of the Atomic Energy Commission. In October 1949 this Committee met and although it encouraged further research into thermonuclear reactions, it made strong recommendation against a

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hydrogen weapon. This was a tremendous blow to the H-bomb proponents. They had to wait for a Presidential decision before being able to carry forward their program, and even then, according to the allegations in Mr. Nichols' letter of notification and of the Teller group in the hearings, although Dr. Oppenheimer no longer voiced opposition to the pursuit of a hydrogen weapon, he failed to support the effort with sufficient enthusiasm and therefore seriously hampered its progress. President Truman's order to proceed with the crash program came in January 1950. A few months later Dr. Oppenheimer, because he felt that it was perhaps not appropriate for him to continue as Chairman of a Committee engaged on a program which he had disapproved, offered his resignation as Chairman of the General Advisory Committee to Mr. Gordon Dean, then Chairman of the Commission. Mr. Dean refused the resignation. In company with other members of the Committee who had shared his position on the H-bomb, Dr. Oppenheimer continued as adviser to a program in which he had not concurred but which was now ordered by the President.

This, most briefly and in terms only of the public record, is what is behind the Oppenheimer case. In barest outline, it summarizes a policy division the statement and interpretation of whose details take up, I should say, some two-thirds of the transcript of the Gray Board investigation. The history of Dr. Oppenheimer's attitudes toward thermonuclear research ever since the start of Los Alamos; the degree to which Dr. Oppenheimer might have been responsible for the attitudes of his colleagues and the extent to which his disagreements might conceivably have hampered the efforts of the thermonuclear group; the projects on which Dr. Oppenheimer engaged himself which can be interpreted as diversions from the main thermonuclear goal; the military policies which Dr. Oppenheimer is said to have advocated which differed from the policies of other scientific advisers to the military—all these are the subject of many long days of reasoning and conjecture before the Gray Board, the testimony in which we discover the conflicting scientific and military views and the personal and professional friendships and animosities which are at once the fascination and the horror of Dr. Oppenheimer's peculiar tragedy.

We recall that in Mr. Nichols' letter of notification there were

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some two dozen specific items of derogatory information about Dr. Oppenheimer—that he had been a sponsor of the Friends of the Chinese People, that he had been a member of the Western Council of the Consumers Union, that his wife had been formerly married to a Communist and herself briefly a member of the Communist Party, that his brother had been a Communist, that his brother's wife had been a Communist, etc., etc. Among these allegations we remember there appeared a group of four or five points which dealt with Dr. Oppenheimer's relation to the H-bomb. Quite properly, I think, when the Gray Board announced its findings, it took up each of these specific items seriatim, including those which had reference to the H-bomb issue. In fact, the Gray report devoted what looked at the time, before the transcript of the inquiry was available to the public, like a rather disproportionate amount of space to Dr. Oppenheimer's attitudes on the hydrogen weapon. The public reaction to this part of the Gray report was intensely unfavorable. Liberal sentiment was outraged that in a democracy a man should be condemned because his opinions differed from what came to be ruling opinion—for this was how the public interpreted the Gray Board's evaluation of Dr. Oppenheimer's attitudes in the H-bomb controversy.

This experience of the public response to the Gray report behind it, the Atomic Energy Commission was far more cautious than the Gray Board had thought to be. With an impressive show of democratic conscience, it ruled the matter of Dr. Oppenheimer's opinions on the H-bomb out of the discussion of his fitness for clearance. It is nevertheless my belief, on my reading of the record, that whatever pitfalls the Gray Board was led into by its attempt to deal with Dr. Oppenheimer's attitude toward the H-bomb, it was at least honest in trying to reach a conclusion on this most considerable aspect of the case. On the other hand, the Atomic Energy Commission, in steering clear of the disagreeable charge of punishing a man for his opinions, evaded the very issue in which, I believe, its differences with Dr. Oppenheimer and its suspicions of him had crystallized. For while the two parts of the Commission's case against Dr. Oppenheimer—(1) his Communist associations, his character and his discretion and (2) his attitude toward the H-bomb—can now be separated as the Commission has separated them, the record of the inquiry leaves no doubt in my mind but that the two parts were

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intimately connected in the Commission's formulation of its action against Dr. Oppenheimer. Indeed, I am wholly persuaded that it was precisely because of Dr. Oppenheimer's differences with the H-bomb enthusiasts, with all the conflicts of personality that this dissension aggravated, that his Communist past was reopened and the question of his loyalty revived.

Now, if this is so, it is obvious that motive is immediately and most importantly called into question. Is there, we must ask, anything in Dr. Oppenheimer's Communist past to account for his opposition to the H-bomb and to warrant the suspicion that his scientific-military opinions were improperly motivated? Or is improper motive to be ascribed, not to Dr. Oppenheimer, but to those who oppose him?

I am frank to confess that from the preconceptions of a conventional anti-Stalinist position, the view I first took of this aspect of Dr. Oppenheimer's case was that Dr. Oppenheimer, once an admitted fellow-traveler, had favored the fiercest possible weapon which would presumably be used against Germany or Japan but had opposed the fiercest possible weapon which would presumably be used against Russia. On this line of reasoning I had concluded that Dr. Oppenheimer's opposition to the H-bomb was wrongly motivated. The transcript has now profoundly altered this earlier view. It is now my opinion that Dr. Oppenheimer's former political attitudes are wholly irrelevant to his H-bomb position, and that the reason he was reinvestigated was because he represented a way of thinking and perhaps even of being which was antipathetic to a dominant faction and because the political climate of our times had prepared an appropriate ground for his defeat.

In large part this change in my view is dictated by the knowledge which the record gives us, which I have already tried to suggest, of the intense factionalism involved in Dr. Oppenheimer's case and of the range and quality of the hostilities which surrounded the professional divisions. But it is also influenced by the clear light which the record sheds on the nature of Dr. Oppenheimer's opposition to a thermonuclear weapon and its evidence of the variety both of judgments and political backgrounds which could meet on his side of the controversy.

The allegation in Mr. Nichols' letter, that Dr. Oppenheimer opposed the H-bomb on moral grounds, by claiming that it was not

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feasible, by claiming that there were insufficient facilities and scientific personnel to carry on the development, and on the ground that it was not politically desirable, is misleadingly simple. Actually, Dr. Oppenheimer's position involved a combination of very complex and subtle moral, political, strategic and technical considerations, none of which can be understood except in relation to the others and to the state of scientific development at the time of the dispute. In 1949, although development in the fission field had far surpassed our accomplishments during the war, there was no knowledge of whether a thermonuclear weapon was even possible within the laws of nature. In order to follow the few poor leads which were then available in the fusion field, it looked as if there would have to be diverted from the further perfecting and production of fission weapons so much material and personnel that this area of development would be seriously damaged—and in the pursuit of an idea which one did not know would ever be feasible. Added to this question of whether the concerted effort to reach so uncertain a goal was worth its cost in diminished strength in the A-bomb field, there was the question whether the super weapon, *if* it could be produced, was in itself a sufficient addition to our arsenal to have validated its pursuit. Would it be deliverable in terms that made it strategically useful, against what kind of target would it be effective, what would it accomplish that could not as well or better be accomplished by a large enough number of varied atomic weapons such as we were already producing so efficiently? It was Dr. Oppenheimer's opinion, shared by many experts, that from a purely technological-strategic point of view, the gamble was a bad one.

And this scientific-military position was implemented by a moral-political position. Our efforts for the international control of atomic weapons, in which Dr. Oppenheimer had played a major role, had failed. Was the answer to start a race with Russia for even more destructive weapons? It was Dr. Oppenheimer's reasoning that if atomic weapons were ever to be outlawed, certainly this was less likely to be accomplished in the atmosphere of a prodigious new research for a still worse bomb than the A-bomb; and in the meanwhile we might lose our present lead over Russia in the A-bomb field. Further—and this was an aspect of the argument which was stressed even more by former Ambassador Kennan and other defense

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witnesses than by Dr. Oppenheimer himself—the result of a crash program for a thermonuclear weapon would be that both the public and the government would tend to substitute military thinking for political thinking, with disastrous effect on our democratic allies.

In other words, neither pacifism nor tenderness for the Soviet Union animated Dr. Oppenheimer's moral and political considerations. And in every reason for his opposition to the crash program he was supported by persons of the greatest variety of political attitudes and background. Whereas before I read the transcript I had supposed that it was only the "liberal-progressives" among the scientists, all of them more or less formed by the same political culture which had bred Dr. Oppenheimer, who joined him in his opposition to the super weapon, the record convinces me that this was not so. There was Oliver Buckley, for instance, the now retired Chairman of the Board of the Bell Telephone Laboratories and previously President of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, who opposed production of the H-bomb in 1949 solely on the ground that you do not pursue a production program before you know there is something producible. There was Dr. Robert Bacher, an upstate Republican, who after helping assess the Russian atomic explosion still believed that an H-bomb was little addition to our arsenal. There was Hartley Rowe, Vice President and Director of the United Fruit Company, who opposed a crash program for the super weapon until we should more nearly have perfected the military potentialities of the A-weapons and who also took the position that no people can go from one awful weapon to another without losing all normal perspective on their relations with other countries. There was Sumner T. Pike, Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of Maine, who was against the H-bomb because at the time we had no knowledge the military needed such a weapon, because of the cost of producing tritium, because a smaller weapon might get more efficiency and because there are benefits as well as destruction to be got from fission but only destruction from fusion. The list can be extended.

The weight of evidence, in short, is conclusive that it was perfectly possible to oppose the H-bomb without being influenced either by Dr. Oppenheimer himself, great as his powers of persuasion are said to be, or by Soviet sympathy. This is not to say, of course, that Dr. Oppenheimer *could* not have come to his own views for

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the wrong reasons. But this would have to be proved, and it is never proved in the record. We can be sure that, had it been, the Atomic Energy Commission would not have dropped this aspect of the case from its final decision. We remember, indeed, that even the Gray Board was able only to affirm the nature of Dr. Oppenheimer's opinions in this area and disapprove of Dr. Oppenheimer for holding them. While the Gray report leaves the impression that perhaps there was a tie between Dr. Oppenheimer's Communist past and his dissident scientific-military views, it does not even describe, let alone prove, a connection.

Thus the case against Dr. Oppenheimer's fitness for clearance which, it seems indicated, was reopened by the Atomic Energy Commission because of the fact and personal-professional consequences of his opposition to the H-bomb was closed by the Atomic Energy Commission on wholly other ground. It was closed on the ground only of Dr. Oppenheimer's character, discretion and associations. We must turn, therefore, to what in point of evidential emphasis is so minor a part of the record but what is so major a part in point of the resolution of Dr. Oppenheimer's case, the items upon which the Commission finally rested its decision not to grant clearance to Dr. Oppenheimer.

II

While it was no surprise to the educated American public that Dr. Oppenheimer had at some time in his past, and perhaps even into the period of his highly sensitive government employment, been a fellow-traveler of the Communist Party, the publication of Mr. Nichols' letter of notification in the newspapers—it was of course released to the public by the defense—came as a considerable shock in even the most knowing anti-Communist liberal circles because of its disclosure of the apparent extent of Dr. Oppenheimer's Communist involvement. There was great force simply in the number of suggestive items mentioned in the Commission's notice. This first blow was much softened, however, by Dr. Oppenheimer's reply to Mr. Nichols, released to the public at the same time. To the sophisticated eye, Dr. Oppenheimer's autobiographical letter, with its careful account of his movement from an extreme of naïveté to political

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good sense, was far from reassuring on the score of his present political comprehension. Nevertheless, overriding the political story, there was the purely human story—dignified and poignant—which conspicuously confirmed his decency and probity, and this despite one or two taints of what looked like disingenuousness, such as his reference to *Harpers* and *Time* rather than *The Nation* and *New Republic* as typical of the magazines with which, in his remoteness from the world, Dr. Oppenheimer had had no acquaintance until the economic depression of the '30s brought him to political awareness.

Dr. Oppenheimer's letter also admirably sustained the Oppenheimer legend as it had grown up over the years. Ever since Los Alamos, Dr. Oppenheimer had of course been something of a culture hero for American intellectuals, especially for literary intellectuals—our contemporary scene does not offer many figures so exciting and sympathetic to the humanistic imagination as this most theoretical of physicists so apt for decisiveness in practical affairs, this genius of science who knows how to read and write English, this lean handsome aristocrat bred in the indulgent Jewish middle-class, this remote man of civilization called from the academy into the fiercest of worlds—a world of inventions to destroy civilization—only to return at will into that purest of academies, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. In identification with Oppenheimer, the American intellectual had been able to identify himself with a society whose most elaborate effort it had been to reconcile individual freedom with governmental responsibility, whose peculiar torment it had been to cherish the private gift while subduing it to the social need and will. And this identification remained unbroken, it was even fortified, by Dr. Oppenheimer's sketch of his life. From the story Dr. Oppenheimer told, the sensitive reader could already determine, even before the hearings had started, that its author was fated to suffer as much for his virtue as for his error, since they were so completely of a piece—which is always the character of the honest radical intellectual. The political history Dr. Oppenheimer traced in his autobiography was, indeed, the almost archetypical political history of the idealistic temperament of his generation: any number of its readers could find themselves in it.

Not that this was Dr. Oppenheimer's own view of his past. What is probably most special about his political story as Dr. Op-

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penheimer recounts it is his own belief that it is so very special. Dr. Oppenheimer tells us, for instance, that before his first essays into radicalism he was living so removed from the world that he had no telephone or radio and read no newspapers or magazines, and he proposes this as an unparalleled lack of preparation for his political awakening. But actually, nothing could be more typical of his time than the intellectual's separation from the concerns of his nation and the world—who among Dr. Oppenheimer's intellectual contemporaries, albeit he did have a radio and telephone and did take a daily newspaper, was better prepared than Dr. Oppenheimer for the political developments of the '30s? Dr. Oppenheimer may have exercised more literally than others of his generation the intellectual's right, so loudly enunciated in a previous decade, to be above the social battle, but he was no more politically handicapped and no more prone to the illusion of salvation by Communism. Here alter a date, there adjust the degree of leftist leaning, and Dr. Oppenheimer's political story is the story of countless high-minded persons of liberal impulse who came to maturity with him.

Nor does the fact that Dr. Oppenheimer made his first affirmative political gestures at a time when there were those of his contemporaries who had already learned the whole miserable lesson of Communist perfidy—the part played by the German Communists in bringing Hitler to power; the part played by the Communists in the Spanish Civil War—and that he was still a fellow-traveler when others of his generation had already learned that a staunch anti-Communism was the great moral-political imperative of our epoch, support any moral judgment against him. It merely attests to the different rates of evolution measurable in the lives of the modern liberal intellectual.

If we are moved to judge Dr. Oppenheimer harshly because he was so slow in seeing the error of the Communist way, it is well to remind ourselves that the speed with which a fellow-traveler breaks with Communism is not necessarily a guarantee of moral and intellectual superiority. A quick disillusionment with the Communist Party can reflect just the opposite of a person's innocence of intense connection with Communism; it can testify to his one-time closeness to the Party. It is the person who came late and who was *not* intimately associated with the Party who is likely to have stayed longest.

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What I mean is this:—Before the Spanish War, in the worst days of the Depression, it was the usual thing that a fellow-traveler thought of himself as in some degree a Marxist or as in some degree committed to the idea of proletarian revolution. His conviction need not be sufficiently strong to have carried him to Party membership. Nevertheless, he was soon close to the inner workings of the Communist Party, for in this period the Party overtly participated even in its innocents' groups. By the mid-'30s, however, the picture had altered. The worst days of our economic depression were past, and the fellow-traveler no longer thought in terms of revolution; a major renovation of our social-economic system no longer seemed mandatory. This was the period of the so-called Popular Front, when a fellow-traveler committed himself, not to Marxism, but only to anti-fascism or peace or some other decent abstract ideal virtually indistinguishable from the traditional ideals of liberalism, and this was the period in which the Communist Party learned to keep a safe distance from the gullible souls it was manipulating to its own purposes. Even the fellow-traveler who, like Dr. Oppenheimer, went to private meetings addressed by Communist functionaries or gave money directly to a Party person, need know nothing of the Party in its actual functioning. Indeed, he could be fully engaged in Communist-controlled affairs and yet be honestly persuaded that he was only a left-democrat, and it would not be until he came to a precise recognition of the nature of the Soviet Union and to the realization that his sympathy for the Spanish loyalists or for migratory workers or his anti-fascist activities were being used to serve the ends of the Soviet Union that he would learn the true import of his leftist associations.

It is of the utmost relevance to his defense and its greatest misfortune that Dr. Oppenheimer, who was *par excellence* the Popular Front fellow-traveler, seems to know so little of the various stages through which a fellow-traveler was likely to have passed and that he has such a poor comprehension of the inevitable part played in the evolution of the radicalized intellectual by idealization of the Soviet Union. As he tries to explain his past, both in his autobiographical letter and in the hearings, we see him floundering to make sense of what he feels *should* make sense but of which he has patently missed the main thread. Thus he tells us that first he disliked Russia and that then he slowly came to realize that the American Commu-

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nist Party was controlled by Russia, when what he should really have said of himself is that although he was slow to realize that the American Communist Party was controlled by Russia and could therefore continue to think that it was free to pursue its stated objectives, he was even slower to recognize the truth about Russia. He cites his dislike of the Russian purges, the Nazi pact, the plight of the Russian people as evidence of his early disenchantment with Russia, without realizing that even the most profound disapproval of certain aspects of the Soviet performance does not constitute a proper knowledge of the nature of the Soviet Union—all fellow-travelers disapprove of certain aspects of the Soviet performance. He fails to understand that there is but a single criterion of a proper knowledge of the nature of the Soviet Union—the awareness that the Soviet Union is a totalitarianism as absolute as that of Nazi Germany—and that it is only when one knows that Russia is a totalitarianism that one also knows how impossible it is for a local Communist party to be free to pursue its own objectives or to have ascribed to it any decency of purpose.

Those who have been working closely with Dr. Oppenheimer in the last few years assure us—and his testimony amply supports this—that today he is perfectly clear that the Soviet Union is a totalitarianism and that whoever helps a Communist cause is helping totalitarianism. But he is completely ignorant of the slow stages by which his knowledge came to him, and this ignorance, shared by his lawyers, is the source of innumerable contradictions in the defense he offers. For instance, at the start of the inquiry both Dr. Oppenheimer and his counsel speak at greatest length to try to establish the fact of his loyalty to America. Document after document is introduced to prove that the defendant is a patriotic citizen with a well-defined anti-Soviet position. Typical is an excerpt from an issue of *Foreign Affairs* in which Dr. Oppenheimer writes: ". . . The second aspect of our policy which needs to be mentioned is that, while these proposals [about atomic control] were being developed and their soundness explored and understood, the very bases for international cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union were being eradicated by a revelation of their deep conflicts of interest, the deep and apparently mutual repugnance of their ways of life, and the apparent conviction on the

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part of the Soviet Union of the inevitability of conflict. . . ." The date of this document is January 1948, and it is clear that the period Dr. Oppenheimer is discussing is the previous year and a half—the period since the autumn of 1946 when the Baruch plan was submitted to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission and rejected by Russia and her satellites. But if this "revelation" came to Dr. Oppenheimer only so late, it must be obvious that the ground on which he would have assessed Communists and Communism during the war and immediately after the war was far from as firm as he now imagines it was. What kind of dislike of Russia is Dr. Oppenheimer alluding to, we must ask, which did not include an understanding that her interests were deeply in conflict with ours and that her way of life was deeply repugnant to the democratic way? How *could* a meaningful dislike of Russia such as Dr. Oppenheimer now ascribes to himself have pre-dated his break with Communism, as he says it did, if he broke with Communism early in the '40s and yet could be surprised by the behavior of the Soviet Union in 1946 and '47?

These are not academic questions. They lie at the heart of the bad case Dr. Oppenheimer and his lawyers make for him. Political ignorance is the quintessential weakness of Dr. Oppenheimer's defense.

And this weakness is not lost on counsel for the Commission. In the first hours of cross-examination Mr. Robb has addressed enough questions to Dr. Oppenheimer on what he thought about Communists and Communism at what specific dates to get him into a trap from which he can never extricate himself. I do not mean that Mr. Robb, or, for that matter, any of Dr. Oppenheimer's judges, need be supposed to have a clearer understanding of Dr. Oppenheimer's political development than Dr. Oppenheimer himself has—as I shall presently indicate, much of United States policy and enlightened public opinion during the Roosevelt administration rested on misapprehensions of the nature of the Soviet Union similar to Dr. Oppenheimer's, and history has not yet adequately correlated for most politically conscientious Americans the connection between our lack of realism about Russia and the specific mistakes we made. But his own historical unawareness enables Mr. Robb, with honesty, to

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interpret Dr. Oppenheimer's confusion as evasion or downright untruthfulness and to take the fullest possible advantage of it.

And Dr. Oppenheimer's counsel are totally unequipped to help their client in this area where he desperately needs assistance; indeed, they confound confusion. The defense made by Mr. Garrison and his colleagues is certainly no pro-Communist defense. But neither is it an anti-Communist defense of a knowledgeableness such as the situation demands. It is a typical liberal-progressive defense with all this implies of unwillingness or unreadiness to make a close year-by-year appraisal of the evolving relationship, over the last two decades, between the typical liberalism of our time and the Soviet Union. The result of this political inadequacy, shared by Dr. Oppenheimer and his lawyers, is that Dr. Oppenheimer's honesty is impugned where it might have been most affirmed and his simplicity in confessing past mistakes, instead of ringing a note of sincerity, sounds like manipulation or inverse vanity. Most serious of all, because they lack the intellectual framework for comprehending his political conduct, Dr. Oppenheimer and his lawyers are unable to defend him as they should against concrete charges.

We must keep it in mind that Dr. Oppenheimer's clearance was finally denied him on grounds of character and associations. On the issue of associations, the Commission rests the weight of its decision on the charge that Dr. Oppenheimer has continuing association with Communists, as evidenced by the fact that he has associated with Haakon Chevalier as recently as 1953. (I shall return to this point presently.) On the issue of character there are six charges:

(1) In the matter of the Chevalier-Eltenton incident, he is charged with either having lied to Federal officers in 1943, as he says he did, or of lying today. (The implication being, of course, that he is lying today.) This incident concerns an approach to Dr. Oppenheimer in 1943 by Haakon Chevalier on behalf of George Eltenton for the purpose of obtaining scientific information for Russia. Dr. Oppenheimer rejected Chevalier's overture but did not report the approach until some months after it took place, and when he did finally speak of it to Colonel Pash of Military Intelligence and Colonel Lansdale, security officer at Los Alamos, he told a story which he now says was a tissue of lies except for the mention of

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Eltenton—he reported that an unnamed contact, operating for Eltenton and with access to microfilm and the Soviet consulate, had approached three persons on the project. That is, Dr. Oppenheimer suppressed Chevalier's part in the approach and his own, multiplied himself into three people, and mentioned only Eltenton. It was not until General Groves said he would order him to divulge the name of the contact that Dr. Oppenheimer identified Chevalier and even then he failed to correct his original story that the approach had been made to three people.

(2) It is charged against him that although he now testifies that had he known in October 1943 that Lomanitz was a Communist he would not have supported his desire to return to the atomic project, official transcripts of earlier interviews show that in August 1943 he told Colonel Pash that Lomanitz had given information about the project and in September 1943 he told Colonel Lansdale he knew Lomanitz was a Communist.

(3) It is charged against him that although he now testifies that he had met Rudy Lambert perhaps a half-dozen times prior to 1943, including one or two luncheon meetings in which he discussed with Lambert and another Communist functionary his contributions to the Communist cause, in 1943 he told Colonel Lansdale that he did not know Lambert or what he looked like.

(4) It is charged against him that in 1949 Dr. Oppenheimer testified in a closed session of Congressional Committee about the Communist activities of Dr. Peters but that when a summary of this testimony appeared in a Rochester newspaper, Dr. Oppenheimer wrote a letter to that newspaper in effect contradicting his previous testimony.

(5) It is charged against him that although before the meeting of the General Advisory Committee in October 1949 at which the Committee recommended against the H-bomb Dr. Oppenheimer had had a letter from Dr. Seaborg, the one absent member, voicing agreement with the thermonuclear program, he did not mention Dr. Seaborg's position in his report of this meeting to the Commission and now testifies that the Committee was "surprisingly unanimous" and that he had no way of knowing the opinion of Dr. Seaborg.

(6) It is charged against him that although he told an FBI agent in 1950 that he had not known that Joseph Weinberg was a

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member of the Communist Party until that fact became public knowledge, there is proof that in 1943 he told Colonel Lansdale that Weinberg was a Communist Party member.

On first glance, perhaps even on second and third glance, it is not a pretty picture these charges paint. Even if we rule out of our minds, as the Commission ruled out of its decision, the entire matter of Dr. Oppenheimer's position on the H-bomb and confront only these specific points on which the Commission decided against clearance, the conclusion would seem warranted that Dr. Oppenheimer was condemned on rather substantial evidence against him. The Chevalier-Eltenton incident seems particularly damaging; and, indeed, it is this charge which has given the strongest support to popular sentiment where it has agreed with the decision of the Commission.

It is my own reaction to the Chevalier-Eltenton incident, however, that I find in it support not for the case against Dr. Oppenheimer but only for the case against the conduct of his defense. The record of the hearings leaves little doubt in my mind that Dr. Oppenheimer's sympathy with the Communist movement, in the period of his admitted participation in Communist activities, was rather greater than he now likes to think. But it leaves even less doubt in my mind that his sympathy, in whatever attenuated form, with both the Communist movement and the Soviet Union remained with him far longer than he now realizes. It is my belief that if Dr. Oppenheimer and his lawyers had fully comprehended these historical facts, the outcome of his hearings, at least so far as the findings of the Gray Board are concerned, might have been very different.

Let us supply, for a moment, certain background material to the Chevalier-Eltenton incident which is so disastrously missing from the record. The transcript shows us that in discussion of this episode, the Board frequently raised the question of whether a man is to be trusted with secret information who puts friendship above the security of his country: the point refers to Dr. Oppenheimer's explanation that, like an idiot, he withheld Chevalier's name from security officers and even fabricated a whole tissue of lies about Chevalier's approach to him because of his reluctance to implicate his friend and also himself. But Dr. Oppenheimer's explanation here

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seems to me to be clearly a misapprehension, or a seriously incomplete comprehension, of his own motives. Obviously he would have wanted to protect his friend and himself, but this does not necessarily mean that self-interest or friendship was his only or even major concern. It is my opinion that it was not loyalty to a friend which Dr. Oppenheimer put above loyalty to his country but loyalty to that amorphous but compelling entity called "the movement." It was, if you will, loyalty to his own still-recent past.

In 1943, America had been at war for two years, and Dr. Oppenheimer was completely identified with the patriotic effort. He no longer thought of himself as committed to the radical movement, he was committed to America. But still he must have retained, as every radical does in the long period of weaning himself away from his former ties, a certain loyalty to what he might have described as the radical spirit. Not unless his break with Communism is sudden and violent, and sometimes not even then, does the former Communist or fellow-traveler immediately free himself of all the emotions which once attached to the radical cause. In fact, there is nothing he fears more than that in his separation from his former commitments he will go to the other political extreme and become a reactionary. Almost inevitably, for a long time he retains an unfounded, unspecified loyalty to some generalized radical idea, if only to prove to himself that he has not betrayed that good part of his own past which first brought him to Communism.

This is very different, however, from a sympathy with one's own radical past which would embrace tolerance of overt anti-American action on the part of a Communist, such as was represented for Dr. Oppenheimer by George Eltenton. Dr. Oppenheimer did report Eltenton to the government because he suspected Eltenton of being a spy. He had no reason—he tells us—from his knowledge of Chevalier to suspect that Chevalier was a spy. It is my reconstruction of Dr. Oppenheimer as he was in 1943 that he would have considered himself not merely a disloyal friend—that would not have been so important to him—but a disloyal human being—disloyal, that is, to the idealistic aspect of his former radicalism and to himself—had he named Chevalier without being forced to. It is also my belief that he felt he had totally discharged the duties of patriotism and conscience while at the same time retaining his self-respect when, on

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his own initiative, he directed the Federal officers to Eltenton.

As to the embroidery around the story he told—the gratuitous mention of microfilm and the fanciful multiplication of himself into three persons—these additions I do not find either as inexplicable or as naive as they now seem to Dr. Oppenheimer. It is very likely that even on the periphery of the Communist Party, and at his innocent distance from spying, Dr. Oppenheimer had heard tales of microfilm and espionage chains which came to mind as an effective means of underscoring the reality of a spy danger while yet concealing what had actually happened. When we remember that less than two years before this Chevalier approach took place, Dr. Oppenheimer was still making his contributions to various causes he thought worthy directly through a Communist Party representative, and when we consider the extreme difficulty with which even the staunchest anti-Communist liberal, long years after he has entirely broken with the Party, reveals the names of former associates in the movement, perhaps what should surprise us is not that Dr. Oppenheimer suppressed Chevalier's name but that he had already progressed to the stage where he was able to name Eltenton.

But there is another point connected with Dr. Oppenheimer's attitudes in 1943 which makes his behavior in the Chevalier incident understandable even without this much subjective analysis—and that is the liberal culture of the time. Several witnesses for the defense, when they are asked their opinion of the Eltenton-Chevalier matter, call attention to the difference between our present feelings about security, especially vis à vis Russia, and those of 1943. Fortunately for our confidence in the historical memory, there are even some few who can recreate the general political-cultural context in which Dr. Oppenheimer committed the mistakes on which he is now judged. Notable among the latter is Colonel Lansdale, a defense witness, whose transcripts of conversations with Dr. Oppenheimer in the days when Lansdale was chief security officer for Los Alamos are, ironically enough, brought forward by the Commission as some of the chief evidence against Dr. Oppenheimer. Colonel Lansdale has been talking about the problem of Dr. Oppenheimer's questionable security clearance at Los Alamos, about the extra precautions the security people took because of his former Communist associations, and he goes on:

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"At the same time over in the War Department I was being subjected to pressure from military superiors, from the White House and from every other place because I dared to stop the commissioning of a group of 15 or 20 undoubted Communists. I was being vilified, being reviewed and re-reviewed by boards because of my efforts to get Communists out of the Army and being frustrated by the blind naive attitude of Mrs. Roosevelt and those around her in the White House, which resulted in serious and extreme damage to this country. . . .

"By golly, I stood up in front of General McNary then Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army and had him tell me that I was ruining peoples' careers and doing damage to the Army because I had stopped the commissioning of the political commissar of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and the guy was later commissioned on direct orders from the White House."

Nothing is made of Colonel Lansdale's helpful hints, either by Dr. Oppenheimer or his counsel. Indeed, between the lines of the record one reads the strained embarrassment of all of Colonel Lansdale's listeners as they have such a bitter dose of historical truth forced upon them. This aspect of Dr. Oppenheimer's situation is not to be overlooked, however, even though its pursuit give comfort to those in our present Administration who, for their own bleak purposes, refer to the Roosevelt regime in terms of twenty years of treason. Fairness to Dr. Oppenheimer requires that we remind ourselves that our current acute relations with Russia, of which the Oppenheimer case is only one relatively small result, would very likely never have reached their present point of crisis had not so much of the energy of liberalism been directed, in the very period in which Dr. Oppenheimer failed to report Chevalier, to persuading the American people that Russia was our great ally instead of the enemy of democracy and peace which she had already clearly demonstrated herself to be! If the dominant liberal sentiment of the time, from the White House down, could put its whole blind force on the side of protecting friends of the Soviet Union, why should Dr. Oppenheimer alone have been expected to see with the unclouded eyes of the future and promptly report his friend?

In short, Dr. Oppenheimer's defense should not have rested on trying to assimilate Dr. Oppenheimer's present temper and the temper

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of our present period to the temper of 1943—an effort which could only result in making Dr. Oppenheimer look like a liar. It should have rested on an unequivocal reconstruction of the situation, both objective and subjective, as it obtained in 1943. It should have comprehended and admitted the degree of sympathy with the radical movement, however ambiguous and however unconscious, Dr. Oppenheimer must inevitably have retained even after he supposed he was entirely through with Communism and even coincident with his great patriotic service to his nation. This would in no way have reflected on his present loyalty. On the contrary, it could only have affirmed both his loyalty and his honesty.

We recognize that the point at issue in all six character charges against Dr. Oppenheimer is his probity and we know the extent to which probity is a matter of cumulative effect. If we think we have caught a man in one lie, our trust is by that much diminished; if we suppose we have caught him in two or three lies, it is indeed the generous person who will thereafter give him the benefit of the doubt. In Dr. Oppenheimer's instance we peculiarly have a case where the cumulative effect of one seeming untruth after another goes all against our giving the defendant the benefit of the doubt. But suppose that in the Chevalier-Eltenton matter, the suspicion that Dr. Oppenheimer is presently lying had been eradicated by the defense supplying a coherent framework for his admission that he had lied in the past. Not only would this most telling of the charges against him have lost most of its impact but at least one other of the charges—the charge in the Lomanitz matter—would have wholly vanished and an atmosphere of candor would have been created which must surely have worked to Dr. Oppenheimer's advantage in the consideration of other discrepancies in his testimony. In Dr. Oppenheimer's response to questions about his relations with Lomanitz, we have again a situation in which, instead of trying to persuade himself and the Board that in 1943 he would not have tolerated a Communist in atomic work, Dr. Oppenheimer should have understood and frankly admitted that at that period he saw no reason for alarm in employing a Communist, and that this was a point of view which was shared by any number of persons just as importantly engaged as he in the nation's business. He would then

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never have been in the position of saying in 1953 that he would not have sponsored Lomanitz in 1943 had he known Lomanitz was a Communist, only to have the Commission prove that in 1943 he did know Lomanitz was a Communist. And his counsel could then have advantageously recurred to the fact revealed in Colonel Lansdale's testimony, that it was Dr. Ernest Lawrence, one of Dr. Oppenheimer's chief opponents in the H-bomb controversy, who had "yelled and screamed louder than anybody else" when the security officers tried to rid the atomic project of Lomanitz by inducting him into the Army.

And two such confirmations of probity would have started the ball rolling in the direction of trusting Dr. Oppenheimer rather than distrusting him, and permitted the generous but by no means strained interpretation of the contradiction between the fact that Dr. Oppenheimer told Lansdale in 1943 that Weinberg was a Communist and the fact that he told the FBI in 1950 that he knew Weinberg was a Communist only when it became public knowledge. After all, it is perfectly plausible that over seven years a man can forget the nature or source of information he once had. As to the charge that he told Lansdale in 1943 that he did not even know what Rudy Lambert looked like whereas in 1953 he admits to having seen him six or seven times, including one or two luncheon meetings at which he discussed with Lambert and another Party representative his contributions to Communist causes, surely Dr. Oppenheimer could only have strengthened his case if he had simply proposed, in rebuttal, the two likely and quite uncontradictory reasons for having told Lansdale what he once did—(1) that possibly such were still the remnants of his Communist partisanship and guilt in 1943 that he did not wish to incriminate either Lambert or himself by recollecting him and (2) that he may actually have forgotten Lambert in 1943 but recalled him to mind now through his recent intense searching of his past. This second explanation is, indeed, strongly suggested by Dr. Oppenheimer's testimony taken in conjunction with Mrs. Oppenheimer's: when Dr. Oppenheimer was preparing for these hearings, he evidently and most naturally consulted his wife's recollection of persons and events on which his own memory was unsure. It is perfectly conceivable that Dr. Oppenheimer was telling the entire truth when he told Lansdale he had no recollection of Lambert, and that Lam-

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bert, among many other earlier associations, was recalled to him in his joint research into his Communist past with his wife. All married people have had this experience.

There remain, then, the charge in the Seaborg matter and the charge in the matter of Dr. Peters. Of all the charges on which the Commission rests its case, the worst-founded, it seems to me, is the charge that Dr. Oppenheimer is not a trustworthy character because he said that the recommendations of the meeting of the General Advisory Committee in October 1949 were "surprisingly unanimous" and that he did not know the opinion of the one absent member, Dr. Seaborg, whereas Dr. Seaborg had communicated his mildly dissenting opinion in advance of the meeting. There were nine members of the Committee, eight of whom were present and agreed. Who that has ever worked in committee would not call this surprising unanimity? As for Dr. Seaborg's letter, stating his position on the H-bomb, this was produced from Dr. Oppenheimer's own files. Obviously, Dr. Oppenheimer could not have had any conscious intention of suppressing Dr. Seaborg's disagreement unless he remembered this letter which communicated Dr. Seaborg's views; and if he remembered it, nothing would have been easier than to destroy it. This explanation does not of course cover Dr. Oppenheimer's failure to include Dr. Seaborg's view in the report of the meeting which was given the Commission. In submitting, as he did, a majority and minority expression of the sentiments of the Committee without mentioning Dr. Seaborg's communication, Dr. Oppenheimer did, I suppose, fall short of his whole duty as Chairman. Perhaps this was purposeful, perhaps it was only careless, but whichever, the omission is fairly judged only in the light of Dr. Seaborg's own lack of firm conviction in the controversy, as revealed in his weak communication and by the fact that in the next meeting of the Committee Dr. Seaborg said he would prefer not to express his views.

In the Peters matter the Commission charges that Dr. Oppenheimer testified in one fashion about the Communist activities of Dr. Peters before a closed session of Congressional Committee and then in effect contradicted himself in a letter to a Rochester newspaper which had reported his testimony. Dr. Oppenheimer acknowledges that he made this shift; he tells us he wrote the letter because various people accused him of having been unfair to Peters and be-

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cause Peters himself told him his facts were mistaken. Well, assuredly a political man would have been unmoved by this protest. Having put his opinion on record, he would have stuck to it at whatever risk of having done someone an injustice. But Dr. Oppenheimer, I think it has been sufficiently demonstrated, is not a political man—not even as intellectuals go. And he is a scientist, which is its own kind of intellectual. What the political man considers undue susceptibility to influence, someone of Dr. Oppenheimer's background and apparent temperament accepts as in the very nature of his business; it is his mark and his work to be available to correction. And while I would not wish to imply that Dr. Oppenheimer's alteration of his stated opinion of Peters speaks well for his firmness of character, as firmness of character may necessarily be gauged in the conduct of the world's business, still this elasticity of judgment and the readiness to make amends where one may have done an injustice are of a kind which, in one's experience of intellectuals, is an everyday affair of the sensitive life of the mind and spirit, to be interpreted as an essential untrustworthiness only by those who place rigorousness and caution above the virtues of imagination and human feeling. The trouble may be that the intellectual does not belong in the active world of politics. But if the government presses the scientist into service, as it now must, it should at least heed the admonition of Mr. Kennan that virtually in the degree that an intellectual has special gifts to give his country, he must be recognized as a special instance of moral-intellectual development and not at each moment be held to account by the conventional criteria of behavior. In the sense that their conduct will not, by its very nature, always conform to the strictest requirements of military or political necessity, all gifted men and not alone Dr. Oppenheimer must be thought of as calculated risks.

General Groves and Colonel Lansdale, the two military officers whose knowledge of Los Alamos is most intimate, have much to tell us of the scientific temperament as it displayed itself during the tense days when the atom bomb was being sought for, especially of the almost willful flouting of security regulations by the top personnel of the project. Dr. Oppenheimer comes out considerably better from their report than most of his colleagues—so much better that it even seems something of a paradox that it is he alone who is now

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denied clearance. True, when Dr. Bacher hired the Communist or once-Communist Morrison for Los Alamos or when Dr. Lauritsen calmly states that he would gladly visit at the present time with the Communist or once-Communist Serbers, there is no previous Communist affiliation on the part of Dr. Bacher or Dr. Lauritsen as there is on Dr. Oppenheimer's part to suggest that their carelessness might stem from a possible Communist preference. We must bear it in mind, however, that with the exception of Mr. Murray, none of Dr. Oppenheimer's judges considers Dr. Oppenheimer disloyal. We have several times been assured that Dr. Oppenheimer's lack of candor, his carelessness and susceptibility to influence and his continuing association with Communists[1] are not to be construed as evidence or even suspicion that Dr. Oppenheimer is now a man of divided political allegiance. But if the Commission sincerely believes that Dr. Oppenheimer's mistakes and indiscretions and discrepancies of testimony are unconnected with his Communist past, and if it truly believes that his conduct in the matter of the H-bomb is irrelevant to the disposition of his case, why has it not undertaken to reinvestigate all the people who have security clearance in order to determine whether they deserve to be considered better risks than Dr. Oppenheimer? Can their characters and conduct any more than Dr. Oppenheimer's sustain the kind of probing to which his has been submitted?

When we rid Dr. Oppenheimer's case of the personal-professional interests in which it is so thoroughly entangled and when we have eliminated from its consideration Dr. Oppenheimer's differences with present dominant military-scientific opinion, there remains of course only a single matter for decision: On the basis of the evidence which we have before us, is or is not Dr. Oppenheimer the kind of man whom we can now trust with our secrets? Clearly, this is

1 The word is used in the plural but only a single instance is cited by the Commission—namely, Dr. Oppenheimer's continuing association with Chevalier. Specifically, this refers to the fact that Dr. Oppenheimer twice met with Chevalier in Paris in late 1953. One of these meetings, however, was for the purpose of going with Chevalier to visit Malraux, and anyone who knows Malraux's political history must have the gravest doubt that Malraux would receive Chevalier if he thought Chevalier was still a Communist. In other words, Dr. Oppenheimer would seem to have had Malraux's seasoned political judgment to support his own opinion that in continuing his association with Chevalier he was not continuing an association with a Communist.

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not an absolute matter; anyone who is human is a risk. It is a relative matter; it is relative to what we have a right to expect of a man and what we expect of other men in whom we do place our trust. It seems to me that the very strict standards by which Dr. Oppenheimer is now judged are standards by which virtually anyone might fail. Is Mr. Griggs, who reports minutes of meetings where minutes apparently do not exist or who, apparently alone of some 50 to 100 people, remembers that Dr. Zacharias wrote ZORC on a blackboard, a more reliable character than Dr. Oppenheimer who reports a fact differently in 1950 than he did in 1943 or who multiplies one person into three? Is Mr. Borden, who has accused a man of being a spy without evidence to support it, a better character than Dr. Oppenheimer who changed his evidence against a man when he was told it was mistaken? Or to take an example from the side of the defense: Is Dr. Conant, who does not remember a letter from Dr. Oppenheimer before the famous October 1949 meeting, any the less suspect for this lapse than Dr. Oppenheimer who does not remember a letter from Dr. Seaborg before the same meeting?

It is my guess that everyone around Dr. Oppenheimer has been much educated by Dr. Oppenheimer's experience. But so has Dr. Oppenheimer himself been educated, and not only by the experience of his own investigation but by his total political experience of recent years. There was a time, before Dr. Oppenheimer had come to understand the true nature of the Soviet Union, when surely it was the gravest of risks to trust him with secrets which the Soviet Union wanted so badly. But he never told those secrets then, and to have granted him clearance at that time only to take it away from him now, when at last he has learned the error of his way, seems to me at best to be tragic ineptitude. In effect, it constitutes a projection upon Dr. Oppenheimer of the punishment we perhaps owe to ourselves for having once been so careless with our nation's security.

I am afraid that in concentrating on what seem to me to be the main lines of investigation of Dr. Oppenheimer's situation, I have done but poor justice to the case in all its complexity of content and implication. I urge the readers of this article to read the transcript of the hearings for themselves—but carefully and fully, and not merely to find documentation for a preconceived judgment of Dr. Oppenheimer's deeds and motives.

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David Paul

TIME AND THE NOVELIST

What to do with time, what to do with himself, this, of course, is the indissoluble problem for everyone. For the novelist in his work it resolves itself into two problems, equally delicate and difficult. What he does with himself in his narrative is a question of endless and fascinating complexity. What he does with time is the problem which, when successfully solved, is the least perceptible of all to the reader. We can read Jane Austen's novels again and again without being more than casually aware of her constant and minute preoccupation with the calendar. Yet she used an actual calendar, counting days, weeks, months, calculating seasons, with the probable degrees of variation of weather in each season, the probable influence of such weather and seasons on the activities and whereabouts of her characters—all this constituted one of her basic tasks in each novel. And it was so successfully achieved that the reader need do no more than accept its results as inevitable, until he begins to read the novels with some idea of the writer's point of view.

Every story (whatever else it may be) is an attempt to beguile time with an artificial version of it. In the world of facts we are always at the disposition of time, we live under its control. In the story, time is under the control of the narrator. So far as he can work his magic, and command the consent of the reader, he can do what he likes with time, not only within but without reason. A story which moved steadily backwards in time is not inconceivable, but such a simple reversal would not only call for the greatest skill, it would leave the application of it a doubtful question, except as a feat of virtuosity. The story can move faster or slower than time—in fact every narrative does so, since it must, if it is more than a summary, involve the description of acts and thoughts which are in-

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stantaneous and which necessarily cease to be so in words. Words have to dictate their own tempo.

Nowhere is this more evident than in poetic narrative, and the fact that the tempo of the narrative must be more or less subordinated to the tempo of the verse form (a fact more obvious in Byron than it is in Chaucer) is perhaps the principal reason why the story, as soon as it began to assume the proportions of the novel, discovered the necessity of prose. The transition is often accepted as a regression, a compromise, a renunciation of the demands of poetry, and a humble self-restriction to the demands of prose. But it was not by any means so simple as a move from a higher to a lower world. Narrative found its way into prose because only prose will deal with the dimension of time as we accept it and are controlled by it in daily life. The prosaic and the poetic conceptions of time are fundamentally different and almost mutually exclusive. It is the latter conception which, curiously enough, can become the more obsessive. How many times is Time mentioned in Shakespeare's sonnets? To lament time's tyranny, to try to ignore it, or in some way to transcend it, are the common approaches of poetry since poetry began. And time remains one of the chief preoccupations of modern verse, in the effort to understand it, not in its own terms, but in those of timelessness, to view it through the conjectural lens of eternity.

The difficulties of a poet in coping with time in an ordinary, narrative sense, are to be seen in all their bewildering variety in *The Faerie Queene*. The pattern of Spenser's words is such that time is continually being caught up in the dragging net of his stanza. Whatever the speed of the action enclosed by it, the variable but ever-recurrent pattern of acceleration and slowing to a pause, to which it must conform, divides and entrammels the action, just as a reflection in water is broken by the ripples of the surface. That is why his verse attains the greatest clarity in the long spells of contemplative calm, and is most obscure where the action is rapid, or divided by the complexity of the plot. It might be said that Spenser's narrative moves slower than time, since not many of us ever contrive to read all of his unfinished story—and even if we did, trying to remember its beginnings and motives, its causes and effects, its shape as a whole would still be a hopeless business. A completed *Faerie Queene* would suggest something more than time, as we have it at our disposal, could sustain.

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Malory in prose handled a mass of material as heterogeneous as Spenser's, as exaltedly vague in purpose, as confusing in detail and situation, yet the *Morte d'Arthur* has a compelling clarity and unity when compared with the *Faerie Queene*. Malory's narrative may meander, may start again and again from a different point of his compass, but it always draws in toward his central meaning. His battles, tourneys and quests may all be vaguely alike in the memory, but while one reads one cannot but recognize the almost mathematical pattern which the medium of prose compels him to impress on them. Vague as the history of Arthur may be, it progresses through time, it has a rise, a climacteric, and a fall. Though there was the intention of a similar over-all pattern in the *Faerie Queene* it remains so difficult to deduce that it is virtually not there in the poem's total effect. And this is chiefly because Spenser's verse-form prevented him from coming to coherent terms with the time-dimension.

Byron's *Don Juan* is as modern in its sophistication and irony as Spenser's poem is the reverse, and it is perhaps the last spontaneous attempt at a novel in verse in the language. The Victorian experiments in this direction have a quality of freak or of self-conscious revival about them which puts them apart. Byron's *Don Juan* has a certain kinship with Stendhal's novels. The hero has something of a Julien, of a Fabrice about him, and Byron's approach to his subject is, in its way, immensely matter-of-fact. How, for advantages and disadvantages, does his verse-narrative compare with its kindred novels in prose? In the first place, the *ottava rima* stanza holds a continual temptation, for a cynic and a wit, to epigrammatic closure with each final rhyme, a temptation to discontinuity. Moreover the pace of the verse can be made to vary only a very little compared with the resources of prose. Pursued at length, it is forced into a jog-trot.

Again, the canto is a much more artificial form of division than the chapter. It demands a high degree of unity in itself, complete with induction, beginning, middle and conclusion. True, Byron sometimes cocks an eyebrow at these conventions, can begin a canto with

Hail, Muse, etcetera, we left Juan sleeping—

and plunge back into the narrative exactly where he left it. But much more often he reproduces, in his own fashion, the conventions which a long tradition, from Chaucer and Ariosto, had forced on his chosen form.

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Don Juan is not so very remote in spirit from a favorite novel of Byron's—*Tom Jones*; but while the poem represents the dandified, artificially rejuvenated old age of the form in which it was cast, Fielding's novel may stand for the vigorous, if rather heavily swaddled infancy of prose fiction. A Herculean infant, grappling one of the most ingenious plots ever devised, it remains as remarkable for the encumbrances it has to cope with as for its sheer strength. The novel has wrested itself free of the poetic form, but remains loaded with nearly all the epic trappings. Invocations, inductions, catalogues, set pieces, heroic similes, all are there, and the fact that they are all treated with jocularity makes Fielding's sense of obligation no less obvious. *Tom Jones* comes only a generation after *The Rape of the Lock*, but where Pope's heroicomical devices are of the essence of his poem, the same devices, tremendously enlarged in Fielding's prose, begin to grow tremendously extraneous. Fielding's apparent compulsion to use all the 'business' of epic poetry was perhaps in part a reaction against the journalist monotone of Defoe, in part a conscious effort to give dignity to the form of the novel. It was also a part of his education, which he could not escape. What is most remarkable is that, underlying all the pseudo-epic business, and the personal harangues, there is a close and matter-of-fact preoccupation with time. Fielding's chapter-headings, which often denote no more than the amount of time covered, are not merely a joke, an attempt to escape giving the chapter's content a name. They show that he was continually measuring the time of his narrative, mentally, with a pair of calipers.

One of the chief reasons for the existence of the novel is that it is not dominated by any indispensable formal pattern which might interfere with or superimpose a difficulty on the pattern of events in time with which it deals. It has the advantages and disadvantages of being the freest of all literary forms, and it was, in a way, the disadvantages that were at first the most obvious. Fielding, Richardson and Sterne, each in a different way, had to contrive barriers against the chaos of too much freedom. Sterne's choice was the most curious and the most difficult of the three, because it comes nearest to that chaos. In a way he made his whole novel consist of the personal irrelevances which were a part of the current convention. Almost, he made a novel out of not being able to write a novel. His display of

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incompetence is genuine, as well as being a principal device. Perhaps not even Flaubert wrote with more desperate difficulty. The root of Sterne's peculiarity, as of Firbank's in this century, was that he could not really cope with the time dimension at all, just as certain painters never come to terms with the third dimension of space. The result, in either art, is a degree of decorative flatness which, in Firbank, for instance, is as mannered and as effective as it is in Beardsley.

The immense labor of Sterne's particular artifice results in the most naturally talkative book in the world, even if the talk could only be Sterne's. The confirmed talker takes no account of time. Time was an object of terror to a sick and aging Yorick, and his novel might be called an attempt to talk time out of his mind altogether. As for Firbank, who could only cope with time in terms of sudden accidents or equally sudden gaps, one need hardly wonder if the deficiency was accidental or deliberate. The charm of his novels is that time simply isn't there, except as a conjectural and capricious element kept in hiding; just as the charm of a Japanese woodcut is that the third dimension is there and not there, half suggested by the two dimensions in which the artist works, but never infallibly indicated by any observed rules of perspective. Firbank's Mrs. Shamefoot, in *Vainglory,* is his Madame Bovary, and her life consists of one motive and one event. She aspires to immortality in the form of a stained-glass window. Having chosen her Cathedral, she plies the Bishop and the Canon in turn for permission to install it, in vain. In desperation, she summons the Devil. He refuses to come. Then, between chapter and chapter, the Event occurs: "Ever since it fell, she has been going about in such heavens of joy!"—a tower of the Cathedral has fallen. Now all is easy. A window in the new tower will be welcome. She is installed, and retires to the beatification of studying her own image in glass.

Firbank's solution to the time problem is only one of many which novelists in this century have had to discover for themselves. Evidently it is no longer the simple convention, observed almost unconsciously, which it was a hundred years ago. Even in the nineteenth century, it was only a Tolstoy who could present with absolute conviction the changes wrought in a character by a generation of time. The characters in Stendhal remain a constant, even when they have his own inexhaustible supply of youthful energy and resource. The

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essentially spasmodic quality in Stendhal is mitigated by his matter-of-fact manner, by the dry light of his prose. Nevertheless, the gods in his particular clock were Caprice and Boredom, and the time which they dictate is appropriately erratic, running to extremes which, in theory, may seem legitimate enough—until we are stationed, with Lucien Leuwen, in the endless dreariness of the garrison at Nancy, or locked up, with Julien, in the seminary; and then we can hardly avoid noting an element of mania in Stendhal's flights and pauses. He is both the most relentless and the most impulsive of novelists, and the combination must always be something of an enigma.

The narrative time in Constant is closely, a little too neatly geared, perhaps, to his motif, and yet it is remarkably true to the workings of time in the memory, if not as actually experienced. Everyone's memory, I think, is like a more or less easily adjustable stencil; with our minds on a certain theme or person, we move the stencil so that it reveals, in succession, the memories of all the events in time, however capriciously they may have been divided from each other, which have reference to that particular theme or person. The intervening spaces, concerned entirely with other things, become as blank as concentration can make them. This unifying faculty of memory tends to ignore the effect of time as duration. Two closely related events in the memory, however far apart in time they may have been, tend to become continuous with each other. How methodically Constant applied his stencil can be seen in the unfinished *Cécile,* recently discovered and published. The same method is as thoroughly, if less visibly applied in *Adolphe* whose slender narrative covers the author's two-year liaison with Anna Lindsay, or his sixteen-year enslavement to Madame de Staël, according to whether the heroine, Ellénore, is identified with the one or the other. But perhaps Ellénore herself is the result of Constant's having applied his accurate stencil to the idea—and the experience—of Woman, in sexual relationship with himself. This would explain why Ellénore is not so much a character as a bundle of emotional reactions, revealed with surgical clarity, and why she is, on the whole, much closer to Madame Lindsay than to Madame de Staël. The latter's personality was a phenomenon which had to be largely annulled in the analysis of an emotional relationship. As the tyrannical, interfering agent in *Cécile* she is much more obviously herself.

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A classically simple solution to the time problem, such as Constant's, can only throw up the bewildering variety of approaches to it over the past fifty years. The last notable addition to these experimental attempts at new solutions was the redistribution of narrative, inaugurated by Isherwood and Huxley in the '30s. So far, it seems to me, this treatment has remained too conscious a question of free manipulation ever to be quite a success. To present the end at the beginning, to show his charatcers as they will be, before he shows them as they were, is a noticeable feat on the part of the novelist, but somehow it is not enough in itself. It results in an eloquent disarrangement which needs to be completed by the eloquence of a new arrangement. It still has the quality of a discovery which ought to be valuable, but whose full value remains to be discovered—perhaps by some novelist of the immediate future.

The novelists of a generation earlier had been forced to their own solutions of the problem of time. It pressed on the more sensitive among them in a way which had not troubled a Meredith or a Trollope, not even a Hardy or a James. Perhaps the first complete break with the self-confident smoothness of the Victorian narrative tradition was made by E. M. Forster, with the appearance of *The Longest Journey* in 1908. No debut could have been less deliberately formidable—or more dismaying for most of the writer's elders and contemporaries. How well one can understand Henry James's paternal welcome to a Walpole or a Mackenzie, and his startled, if polite distaste for a Forster! The former were in the Master's own tradition, if only in so far as they regarded Fiction as a mass of imaginary stuff which had to undergo endless manipulation into the sacred shape of a novel. But in Forster the opposite, the alarming, the almost sacrilegious thing had occurred. Here was not a novelist manipulating the sense of life into a convenient and elegant shape. On the contrary, here was someone trying, in all modesty, and with a childlike perspicacity, to make allowances for life's shapelessness, its hopeless deficiency of plot. Here was a novel in which things happened without arrangement or preparation, as they so awkwardly do in life!

For the Victorian novelist time had been a generously circumambient element, softening the vistas of the past, smoothing off the

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sharp corners of accidents, and forewarning, like the air before a thunderstorm, of crises in the future. Doom sits on the shoulder of Hardy's Tess from the moment of her first colloquy with the stars. Melville's Ahab, Conrad's tragic heroes are haloed with their destiny from the start. This sense of doom, of predestination, was scarcely seen to be a comfortable thing—a worn and patched but still handsome remnant of the cloak of personality as it was donned by the Elizabethan tragic hero—until it was stripped off altogether. Doom is a reassurance compared with an unpredictable fate; and an allotted role, however tragic, is a comfort compared with a character which is subject to change by accident, and which may be prevented by chance from ever becoming what is called an 'integrated presonality' at all.

Forster began by refusing either the tragic or the comic integration for his characters, and his refusal was based on a new sense of time and circumstance. With *The Longest Journey* the nineteenth-century clock came to a stop, and time became a machine which refuses to work smoothly any more. It stands still for agonizingly long intervals, while people are held in unbecoming, humiliating or false positions, from which only time can release them; or else it moves with fatal suddenness, and a character who was large with self-confident life before our eyes a moment ago, is mysteriously dead and gone. There is, maybe, an excessive degree of passivity in such a view: and a sense of injury governs this first novel to the point of distortion. But it remains the author's most eloquent single statement (it is still a more startling, a more modern book than *Howards End*) until, with *A Passage to India,* a sense of reconcilement, based though it is on the fact of irreconcilables, comes to give a mellowness, a depth of perspective to views which remain fundamentally unchanged.

The Forsterian sense of time was not for anyone else, and other contemporary solutions were notably different. Joyce may be said to have killed rather than solved the problem by imposing a strictly mathematical time-limit on his two chief works. And of course he stopped the clock in 1904. A refusal to bargain with the present (which always means the recent past) remains perhaps a fault in a creative writer, whatever his compensating merits. T. S. Eliot, for example, has condemned it as a fault in Hardy, though not in his own contemporary Joyce, in whom it is presumably redeemed by virtues which Hardy did not have.

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But the most persistent and peculiar refusal to bargain with the present is to be seen in the case of Miss Ivy Compton Burnett, in all of whose mature novels, without exception, time has come to a stop somewhere in the 1890s. The consequence is that time refuses to function in a normal way in any of her plots. The seasons, except for a pervading bleakness, are shut out. A child may put a saucerful of water on the nursery windowsill, to see if it freezes, or someone may be sent into the garden to gather flowers for the table; but such details, while they infallibly enforce a dramatic sense of the character concerned, do very little to convince us of the time of year. The garden no more (and no less) exists than the garden outside a window on the stage, and the snow on the window is so much theatrical cotton-wool. Though perhaps none of the novels would transfer to the stage, I think it might be true to assert that *Men and Wives,* for example, contains a greater condensation of dramatic and psychological insight than almost any play written this century. But however well the novel may adapt itself to a dramatic intention, it will not suffer the same kind of adaptation again and again. Dramatic timelessness is all very well on the stage, but in the enforced leisure of a novel it is bound to lead to a degree of desperation. In some of Miss Compton Burnett's latter novels it is hard to resist the idea of one of her more determined characters, having easily won the conversational skirmish at the breakfast table, getting up, going surreptitiously into the hall, throwing the calendar into a drawer, and giving that stubborn clock another despairing shake.

Even so, to shut out time is a better solution to the problem than Gertrude Stein's of driving the clock crazy, of smashing up the time-sequence even within the syntax of a sentence. In the case of Virginia Woolf time flows back into prose on the tide of poetic obsession, of sibylline trance. In her most centrally characteristic novel time becomes a suspensory element in which the characters float and revolve, imprisoned within the clear symmetry of the novel's form. The sense of time as trance sharpens the vision, but even in so doing it tends to reduce all things to an equal degree of importance or futility. And it sees from a distance which tends to equalize individual motives. People almost cease to act upon each other in order to submit to the all-pervading action of time. And, curiously, this sense of time as a mystic process tends to throw up in emphatic and nerv-

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ous relief all the "orts, scraps and fragments" which make up the ordinary, mysterious life of every day.

For one kind of reader, or for one kind of mood, *Jacob's Room* is an irritating series of snapping close-ups of haphazard details of appearance. Given the sense of time as trance, the book begins to assume an order gathered from a thousand hints. But in either case there is a pause on the edge of articulacy, and Jacob himself remains a silhouette on a screen, the meaning of whose eloquent but unapproachable gestures is to be no more than guessed. Later the writer was to indulge in a scherzo on the time theme in *Orlando,* a flight through three and a half centuries within the space of one high-spirited but allegorical lifetime. There is a sense of excessive daring, of dizziness almost, in the smooth and accomplished flight of this fantasy. And its slenderness is weighted, not only with a feminist grievance but with an acute sense of pain. The sibylline view must see time as an interim—an interim between what immensities? And in the back of the writer's mind was the inherited void of an ascetic, unshakable agnosticism. It is this poised conflict between the opposites of irresistible dream and inescapable conviction which gives her writing its peculiar eloquence. With her last novel the whole subject has become an interim, at whose close the unimaginable drama only commences.

Any consideration of time in the novel must end, and perhaps ought to have begun with Proust. But there is little to be added to the exhaustive philosophical discussion of it as his central theme. As the secret of his technique, it has not perhaps been so much considered. The recent publication of *Jean Santeuil,* the novel which occupied the years halfway between *Les Plaisirs et les Jours* and his final work, shows that this must have been the last of his secrets to be discovered. It has been said that the whole of Proust is implicit in his first youthful volume. The same can be said, with greater emphasis, of *Jean Santeuil.* Nevertheless the creative agony of evolving the whole plant from the germ was still to be undergone. *Jean Santeuil* presents, on a small scale, nearly all the *données* of the secret without any real hint of a solution. The result is a curiously desultory brilliance and disunity. Proust himself described the book as being both less and much more than a novel—*"l'essence même de ma vie, recueillie sans*

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y rien mêler, dans ces heures de déchirure où elle découle. Ce livre n'a jamais été fait, il a été récolté."

This is both an apologia and a verdict. Without what followed it, *Jean Santeuil,* for all its merits, could be dismissed as not being the work of a true novelist at all. It is a series of vignettes. Whatever elements of unity it has are awkward and factitious. There is an abrupt and personal harshness in some of the scenes between Jean and his parents; and on the other hand the quality of personal compensation, particularly in the social scenes, is naive to the point of enormity. It is there, of course, in the final work, as when the Guermantes hold up dinner indefinitely while their guest, Marcel, is browsing among their paintings. But in *Jean Santeuil,* when the hero is accused by a social rival of cheating at cards, and threatened with ostracism, he is gloriously reinstated by nothing less than the intervention of royalty (via the influence of a duchess)—paraded at the theater on the arm of a protective King of Portugal, before the astonished and admiring eyes of the whole faubourg!

With the completion of *Jean Santeuil,* the author must have been left in despair. It was clearly not publishable as it stood. And when he came to his final work, how was he to use what was already written? How much more he made of what he did use is as remarkable as what he left out. *Jean Santeuil* is a work which continually crystallizes into distinct episodes. The best of them—for example *Le Scandale Marie,* a masterly *nouvelle* based on the Panama scandal—had perfected themselves beyond the possibility of re-adaptation. They are all too self-contained. Characters appear for their particular scene or story, and then disappear altogether, or else the mention of them fails to evoke any sense of their continuous presence in the book as a whole. Time here is something which stops and starts with the impulse of writing. Time as the interfusing element which holds and hides all things in its own continuity, and can be made to disclose them, time such as this was yet to be apprehended.

The change from the third-person hero in *Santeuil* to the first person in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* was the first essential to Proust's particular, bifocal use of the function of memory. Most writers dealing with a remembered past tend to see it with one eye, flattened and sentimentalized. But from the beginning, in the final work, there is this double focus. The past is seen as past, and as a

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present painfully or ecstatically restored. From the moment when the child lies awake, waiting for his mother to come up to him, there is the double presence of Proust as he was, and Proust as he is at the moment of remembering and writing. So that each past incident is given the solidity and mystery of a double perspective. I have already spoken of the unifying faculty of memory in the case of Constant. Proust succeeded both in enforcing this quality and in recapturing the sense of shock, of nonrecognition which is what memory most tends to minimize. Memory is a betrayal of past reality in that it is always reconciling insuperable inconsistencies, flattening out difficulties, annulling the prejudices, however strong, that were done away with, the hopes that were disappointed. It is always trying to make of the past a *fait accompli*. *Vide* most historians and autobiographers. It was the essence of Proust's genius to recognize the falsification of this process, and to re-establish the sense of the past in all its immediacy and unexpectedness.

Another means to this end was his use of subjective and objective time. One of the triumphant crises of the book is when these are made to fuse: the moment, in *Le Temps Retrouvé,* when the hero, looking at the fantastic changes wrought by time in all the people he knew, and quite innocent of the suspicion of any such change in himself, approaches young debutantes, the children of his friends, with all the ardor of a possible *soupirant*—and they receive him as an elderly person, someone that father knew years ago. Up to this moment we have shared his sense of time as a lucid trance, in which other people undergo the transforming process, improve, deteriorate and die. Now comes the shock that he too is subject to this strange process, and the shock is fully transferred to the reader.

Of the dimensions of character in time I think Odette Swann remains his most perfect realization. More than the Duchess, or Albertine, or Françoise, she is his version of the *Ewig Weibliche,* a consummation of the banality and mystery of woman as a thing of time and fashion. She is the most persistent and intermittent of all the characters in the book, and most of her reappearances are transformations in which a startling difference dominates and precedes the fundamental sameness. Being a born virtuoso, Proust could not resist applying this principle to excess in the case of some characters. But with Odette he never errs. Compare her for a moment with Gibbon's

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masterly appraisal of another version of the eternal feminine—the Empress Theodora. In a dozen pages Gibbon gives us the whole series of Theodora's incredible avatars—born the daughter of a circus master, beginning life as a child buffoon, becoming in turn a strip-tease artist (with footnotes, in Greek, as to the nature of her G-string), the most famous and expensive courtesan in Byzantium, the adored wife of the general and heir-elect, Justinian, and finally the most holy empress, for whose pilgrimages roads were built at enormous expense, and at whose approach crowds flattened themselves to the earth. And in all these phases there is a negative, mysterious consistency. Theodora was no more responsible for Justinian's infatuation (a piece of luck, cunningly used) than she was for her birth. The same may be said of Odette, and of Swann's infatuation for her. But enclose Odette within the obituary-length of Gibbon's summary and she ceases to be remarkable. Her phases become consequential and obvious enough. Whereas in the narrative, each phase, from being the dubious lady in pink in Uncle's boudoir, to her final appearance, incredibly smart, senile and ridiculous, has the value of a strange discovery. Even the fact that an impeccably aristocratic but penniless Comte de Crécy, whom Marcel invites to tea out of charity, proves to be the first husband whom Odette had ruined and deserted, comes as a revelation, another key to the mystery.

Proust's claim to have modeled his work on the Arabian Nights has usually been regarded (or ignored) as a personal foible. Yet the claim can be consistently justified. Proust looked at life and time with oriental eyes in which childlike credulity and absolute doubt were simultaneous. No writer outside the Arabian compendium has ever dwelt so much on the magic of the wish fulfilled, and none more so on the disillusion of fulfillment. The magic of the Arabian Nights is made from the realization of wishes which everyone can share, and recognize as being impossible: Proust's magic is concocted from the extravagant and, at first sight, hopelessly inconsistent details of reality. Throughout his narrative the great magician and transformer is Time. Time brings the fulfillment of every wish—and along with it the irony of change which makes that fulfillment valueless. Only the ultimate wish, the most difficult of all, the wish to be an artist, to make a creative discovery, is free from that accompaniment. Like the Arabian Nights, *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* is a chain

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of narratives whose periodic resolutions are held in suspension by an underhanging continuity: it is a prolonged reprieve from death in the attempt to make a coherent and inclusive story out of life, a continual effort to postpone the threatened end until the ending has been reached. But Proust was to be released, not like Scheherazade from a death sentence, but from life. On his death-bed he was intermittently obsessed by the phantom of a fat, pale woman in black. Was this—reversing the sexes—his version of the Sultan, his own subjective emanation of Death, or Time? Whatever his fears, presumably she was satisfied with his account, and the only kind of reprieve he now wished for was granted.

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Theodore Roethke

THE FOLLIES OF ADAM

I

Read me Euripides,
Or some old lout who can
Remember what it was
To jump out of his skin.
Things speak to me: I swear;
But why am I groaning here,
Not even out of breath?

II

What are scepter and crown?
No more than what is raised
By a naked stem:
The rose leaps to this girl;
The earthly lives in her;
A thorn does well in the wind,
At ease with all that flows.

III

I talked to a shrunken root;
Ah, how she laughed to see
Me staring past my foot,
One toe in eternity;
But when the root replied,
She shivered in her skin,
And looked away.

IV

Father and son of this death,
The soul dies every night;
In the wide white, the known
Reaches of common day,
What eagle needs a tree?

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The flesh fathers a dream;
All true bones sing alone.

V

Poseidon's only a horse,
Laughed a master of hump and snort;
He cared so much for the sport,
He rode all night, and came
Back on the sea-foam;
And when he got to the shore,
He laughed, once more.

James Schuyler

SESTINA

(a translation from Dante)

I have reached, alas, the long shadow
and short day of whitening hills
when color is lost in the grass.
My longing, all the same, keeps green,
it is so hooked in the hard stone
that speaks and hears like a woman.

In that same way this new woman
stands as cold as snow in shadow,
less touched than if she had been stone
by the sweet time that warms the hills
and brings them back from white to green,
dressing them in flowers and grass.

Who, when she wreathes her hair with grass,
thinks of any other woman?
The golden waves so mix with green
that Love himself seeks its shadow
that has me fixed between small hills
more strongly than cemented stone.

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More potent than a precious stone,
her beauty wounds, and healing grass
cannot help; across plains and hills
I fled this radiant woman.
From her light I found no shadow
of mountain, wall, or living green.

I have seen her pass, gowned in green,
and thought the sight could make a stone
love, as I, even her shadow.
And I have walked with her on grass,
speaking like a love-sick woman,
enclosed within the highest hills.

But streams will flow back to their hills
before this branch, sappy and green,
will catch fire (as does a woman)
from me, who would bed down on stone
and gladly for his food crop grass
just to see her gown cast shadow.

The heavy shadow cast by hills
this woman's light can change to green,
as one might hide a stone in grass.

Stanley Kunitz

THE MAN UPSTAIRS

The old man sick with boyhood fears,
Whose thin shanks ride the naked blast,
Intones; the gray somnambulist
Creaks down interminable stairs,
Dreaming my future as his past.

A flower withers in its vase,
A print detaches from the wall;

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Beyond the last electric bill
Slow days are crumbling into days
Without the unction of farewell.

Tonight there suffers in my street
The passion of the silent clerk
Whose drowned face cries the windows dark
Where once the bone of mercy beat.
I turn; I perish into work.

O Magus with the leathern hand,
The wasted heart, the trailing star,
Time is your madness, which I share,
Blowing next winter into mind . . .
And love herself not there, not there.

Claire McAllister

TWO POEMS

RITES OF AUTUMN

The lights of Autumn grazed across the fields.
Maple leaves that changed behind our backs
Hung luminous around the napes of trees;
A streetlamp, flickering on, destroyed the dusk.
  The leaves that dwindled in the north wind waved
  To ships we sailed when summer made us brave.
    All day the air lay heavy and the fruit
    Grew red and round and ripe.

Underbrush lay burning in a ditch
And as the incense circled through the sky
I saw the ascension of the Springtime wish,
And could have wept, but winds were blowing dry.
  I thought, the trees ablaze above the street,
  Of the gaiety that comes out of defeat,

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And how the year had left us big red fruit
Dropping in the orchard of the heart.

The scent of shoots and bramble smoking brought
Ways a summer died where I was born:
Pumpkin gourds that emptied out my thought,
And grinning at me, cobs of indian corn;
The pheasant tails that streaked across the wind
Come streaking through the wheatfields of the mind.
O sweet woods that watched the wild deer; young,
The spirited were they who cocked a gun.

O milkweed blowing from the milkweed pod.
Remember those who opened out the heart
And flung the fibers of their hearts to God,
When all around them, worry, weathers, war;
The breath of Winter whispering Retreat,
They sang, they sang, they sang just where we weep:
Cervantes, ragged, eating his wild wit;
Mozart playing in a room unlit.

And walking down the late September street,
When cloud might bring not cherubim, but blight,
Remember with what arms they decked defeat,
For only such can set the heartbeat right,
Whose life was like that moment when a field
Or any sight that loved us once, revealed
How long the moment, and how short the year,
As when, in towns, I see the wild red deer.

AFTER READING RENAN'S LIFE OF CHRIST

Someone had to write it out that way,
With the logic of a calculating thief
Who turns the diamond over till his eye
Be blear and, bit by bit, his bold heart shrink.

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Michael Harrington

ANDRÉ MALRAUX: METAMORPHOSIS OF THE HERO

"How can we fail to see in this great adventure of the mind and soul, which put forth from the havens of the vast Asiatic desert, the reflux of that which had begun on the Acropolis of Delphi? . . . it is not a continuity of influence, but one of metamorphosis in the exact sense of the term; the part played by Hellenistic art in Asia was not that of a model, but that of a chrysalis."

When Malraux outlined this concept of metamorphosis in *The Voices of Silence,* he was stating one of the most essential affirmations of his life, as will be seen. Yet he was also providing us with an admirable metaphor for his own life and work: metamorphosis. Only with such an elusive term can one understand a man who is already a legend in his lifetime, who seems to have moved unaccountably from revolution in China and Spain to Gaullism in politics and ultimately, aestheticism—a linear progression from the Commissar of the Committee of Twelve to the yogi meditating over Gandharan art.

For the main thing about Malraux is that in the apparently unrelated, almost contradictory, phases of his life, there is a fundamental identity. He has concerned himself with one problem throughout his life, and whether expressed in terms of politics or, as now, of art, this has remained constant amid a series of changes brilliant as that of the caterpillar to the butterfly. Many critics have pointed out a continuity in his work, notably W. M. Frohock, but the truly organic character of this thematic consistency has never been spelled out. This is all the more so since the publication in English of *The Voices of Silence,* for this book is, in a very real sense, the summation of his theme.

The single theme is, of course, man's fate. Malraux once defined

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it by a quotation from Pascal: "Let us imagine a number of men in chains, all condemned to die, and some of them slaughtered every day in the sight of the rest, who see their own fate in that of their companions. This is a picture of the condition of men." What man should and can do is described by Walter in *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg*: "In the prison which Pascal describes, men manage to drag out of themselves an answer which, if I may say so, cloaks those who are worthy of it with immortality."

In this persistent problem, the constant personality has been that of the hero. The successive cloaks—the stages of the metamorphosis—have been politics and art. The environment has always been that of death. Thus, in *Saturne,* when Malraux writes of Goya, "Separated from everything by the absurd, he discovered the vulnerability of the spectator, he understood that the painter can only struggle with himself to become . . . the conqueror of all," Goya, the painter, is certainly a radically different hero from Perken in the jungles of Indochina or Garine at the moment of revolution, yet they are the same person.

In *The Case for DeGaulle,* Malraux describes politics and art as "successive distillations" of the world. If successive is here understood in terms of a metaphor of organic growth, or metamorphosis, Malraux has once more described his own life and art.

First, let us define the hero in terms of Malraux's political novels —*The Conquerors, Man's Fate, Man's Hope* and *The Walnut Trees.*

In all of these novels, the primary motivation of the heroes, and the revelation of their action, is set forth not in political terms, i.e., those of collective struggle, but in individual, metaphysical terms, and the revolution is the first phase of the metamorphosis. To see this non-political character, one need only compare these books with *Darkness at Noon, The Case of Comrade Tulayev* or *The Burned Bramble.*

To say this does not imply a one-dimensional conception of the political novel or of its hero. On this score, compare Malraux with one of the more complex political novelists, Ignazio Silone. Both the *Handful of Blackberries* and *The Walnut Trees* conclude with a meditation on peasant life and its metaphysical significance—the nature symbolism of both titles is not unrelated. Yet for Silone this

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significance is inextricably bound up with the role of the peasant in the collective struggle for justice, while in Malraux's book it is the medium of an illuminated consciousness on the part of the hero, through which he achieves a God-like vision.

The nature of Malraux's hero was already more or less clearly defined in one of the early books, *The Conquerors*. Garine is more anarchist than bolshevik, a fact which Trotsky realized in 1931 when he attacked Malraux for "dilettantism." The masses whose struggle is seen in this book are defined in ultimate, apolitical terms. They are, as Picon has pointed out, more a symbol of absurdity than the class of the revolution. For Malraux, the important fact is that "All Asia is entering on a phase of individualism and discovering death" (Garine), and not whether this or that struggle will succeed. In other words, revolution is not an end in itself, but rather is defined in the context of the individual hero face to face with the absurd.

Roger Stephane has suggested a somewhat extreme footnote to this fact in his *Portrait de l'Aventurier*. He points out that all of the struggles in which Malraux engaged were popular front actions. He was not, therefore, confronted with the strict ideological discipline of the revolutionary party, but rather with bourgeois rhetoric. The point is certainly overstated, yet it has the merit of understanding the "non-revolutionary" character of Malraux's revolutionary heroes.

One need only contrast Malraux's conception of Asiatic revolution with that of Brecht. In *The Conquerors,* for example, Mao, an orator in an anarchist dispute, describes the coolie in a favorite Malraux term, that of the initial, as one "whose only identification mark is the wound on his shoulders and the bruise on his hips." Compared to Brecht's grim, Stalinist morality of revolution in Asia in which the crime is precisely to romanticize the coolie, this is, in revolutionary thought, dilettantism indeed.

An inevitable corollary of this kind of definition of the masses is the aristocratic hero. As symbols of absurdity (for they have been condemned to death by having been born), the people, even in movement, serve primarily to release *one* individual, or at best a few, from man's fate: they are the condition of a personal transcendence. Empson understood this point some time ago when he wrote of *Man's Fate,* ". . . the heroes are communists, but they are frankly out of touch with the proletariat; it is from this that they get their

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pathos and dignity and the book its freedom from propaganda." One might more accurately say, not freedom from propaganda, but freedom from politics.

Thus, the climactic moment of *Man's Fate* is probably Kyo's suicide and Katov's execution. The occasion of both deaths is political activity. Yet their significance for Malraux is in how they express a human solidarity which transcends death. Here again, the central fact is the escape from fate and not the success of the revolution. In the later metamorphosis, it will be the solidarity of art which will achieve this function.

At this point, it is necessary to make an important qualification. My analysis does not imply that revolution is of no consequence for Malraux. No one who has experienced the exciting, visual, almost cinematic, opening of *The Conquerors* could make such a statement. It is of the greatest significance in understanding Malraux that he looked for his escape from fate first in revolution and then in art. These are not accidents. But it is also important to realize that the subject of the search, and the hero who made it, were always the same, because Malraux's concern was not *basically* politics or art, but immortality. Far from diminishing the importance of the politics and art, the understanding of this allows us to place them in their proper perspective.

Man's Hope may seem to be a contradiction of this general thesis. The "hero" *is* a political attitude, the aristocratic individual in his struggle with fate is subordinate to the needs of the struggle. Yet precisely because Malraux allowed something extraneous to his art to intervene in this work, the book has a certain paradoxical character: there is an unresolved tension between the discursive meaning, which is political, and the emotional sympathy, which is not. Frohock is right when he finds the most impressive persons and scenes in the book—Hernandez, Alvear, the descent of the mountain —in an emotional contradiction to the political conclusion. For these events place the hope of man in a solidarity too intimate for the social order, while the formal ending places it in a political cause.

This split was not confined to *Man's Hope*. Even at that time when Malraux was most active in the Left, in the mid-'30s, he was unable to suppress his own fundamental themes. In 1934, at a Stalinist conference on politics and art, he clashed head-on with Karl

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Radek. When he spoke of politics and humanism, his emphasis seemed always to leave the politicals uneasy. And at the very minimum, we can say this of *Man's Hope*: that if the political—even the propagandistic—is formally dominant, the life-long theme of the escape from fate, the individualistic hero, is emotionally pervasive.

The first stage of the metamorphosis is thus defined in terms of the hero of the political novels. Only when the misconceptions about these works have been cleared up can the transition be indicated. For Malraux the revolution was not so much a political act as a struggle against man's fate. This was, for him, the significance of the masses. As a result of this point of view, the hero was almost inevitably an aristocratic one, as distinguished, for instance, from Pietro Spina who is certainly marked off from the peasants and yet is delineated in terms of his relation to them.

The transition from the revolutionary as aristocratic hero to the artist as aristocratic hero was becoming apparent in *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg,* a book which ostensibly represents Malraux's reaction to World War II. The major emphasis has shifted from politics to culture.

The devil's advocate of the novel, Mollberg, states the problem: "If the world has any meaning, death should find a place in it, as it did in the Christian world; if humanity's fate is a story with a point, then death is a part of life; but if not, life is a part of death."

In one sense, Mollberg's devil's advocacy is Miltonic: he is far too successful. The reason lies in a split almost exactly opposite to that in *Man's Hope*. For in *The Walnut Trees,* the very heart of the book is discursive (a colloquy of scholars dominates the entire middle of the work), while Malraux's answer is only in terms of description. True, his hero becomes aware of the persistence of life—the gnarled walnut trees, the peasants in the midst of battle—and escapes from fate to a certain continuity. Yet the intellectual questions, stated with great persuasiveness, are not answered in their own terms. As a result of this, some read the novel as a victory of the pessimistic point of view (more pertinent because Mollberg is presented as a fascist). At the very least, it reveals a deep pessimism in Malraux—and perhaps this almost Manichean attitude was one of the factors which kept him from a political commitment to revolution.

Thus, immediately after World War II, Malraux's hero was

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passing out of politics (the relation to Gaullist activity will be discussed shortly) toward cultural problems. He was still the same hero. His concern in art was to be the same as it was in politics: how to escape man's fate. In the metamorphosis of the hero, there was radical change into a new state—and a radical continuity with the old.

When *The Voices of Silence* appeared in English this year, it caused considerable confusion. At one end of the spectrum was the incredibly philistine review of the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the *New York Times*; at the other end, Randall Jarrell's intelligent and sensitive—yet fragmentary—appreciation. One of the difficulties which the reviewers faced should be clear from my general thesis: that *The Voices of Silence* is a point in a process, a stage in a metamorphosis, and cannot be considered independently of its own past. If it is taken alone, it is a curious and elliptical series of brilliant intuitions, lapses into purple prose, and sweeping generalizations which do not quite explain themselves.

Let me take a few of the leading ideas of this book and attempt to define them in terms of Malraux's obsessive theme, the escape from fate, and the metamorphosis of that theme in all of his work.

Malraux propounds the concept of the museum without walls as a historical phenomenon. Two developments made it possible. The first is technological: the discovery that Greek statuary was not white; the potentiality of reproductions. The second is psychological. As a result of the triumph of the bourgeoisie—a class without an art of its own—the artist was alienated from society. The consequence was a highly individualistic art, hostile to its immediate culture, and therefore capable of acts of the sympathetic imagination in understanding the value of other styles and other cultures—Negro, primitive, Gothic—which official criticism deemed retrograde or not art at all.

The resolution stemming from this analysis is that the artist—a hero who performs a vicarious social function—is able to find a solidarity with the past, and the dead artist with the present. Note that once more the hero is aristocratic: as the revolutionary rose out of the masses to find for himself an answer to the problem of man's fate, *in the present,* so does the artist rise out of *past and present* to answer, for man, the agony of his own existence. The amazing thing

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about the continuity of the two heroes is that it was *specifically* foreshadowed in the days of politics.

In 1930, in *The Royal Way,* a young archeologist in Indochina (whose adventures are superficially similar to those of the young Malraux) remarks, "My view is . . . that the personal value we set on an artist may blind us to one of the main factors determining the vitality of his work. I refer to the cultural status of the successive generations appraising it. It looks as if, in matters of art, the time factor were deliberately ignored. What interests me personally, I must say, is the slow disintegration, the gradual change that comes over such work—their secret life which battens on men's deaths. Every work of art, in fact, tends to develop into a myth." And in another context, the same speaker talks of "the obstinate desire that every artist has to ward off death by a sort of intermittent immortality."

In these quotations, written some two decades before the completion of *The Voices of Silence,* all the major elements in the later book are recognizable. There is the historic factor ("the cultural status of the successive generations"), the metamorphosis, characteristically with its aspect of death ("the slow disintegration, the gradual change), and finally the museum without walls ("their secret life which battens on men's deaths").

The same development of the later theme within the earlier—the action of the chrysalis—can be seen in a very revealing context. Approaching the very height of his activity in the anti-fascist generation of the '30s, Malraux spoke at the Congress of Writers in Paris in 1935. He told the group, "Every work of art is created to satisfy a need that is passionate enough to give it birth. Then the need withdraws from the art work, as blood from a body, and the mysterious process of transfiguration sets in; and it is only our own need, our own passion which can summon it forth again."

Here again, all the major themes of *The Voices of Silence* (with a greater emphasis on the psychology of art) are present: history, metamorphosis, museum without walls. It is, of course, the more interesting because it shows that Malraux was continuing his development even at the very pitch of his political activity. It furnishes a further buttress to the argument which sees *Man's Hope* (from the same period) as a book which reveals a deep duality.

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The Walnut Trees of Altenburg could almost be read as a preface to *The Voices of Silence*—except, as I mentioned before, that the intellectual direction of the novel is far more pessimistic. Yet the question is raised in aesthetic terms. Mollberg formulates the problem: "Between the men we have just mentioned [those from societies which are ignorant of our conception of birth, fate, exchange and death], and the Greeks, or the Gothic man, or anybody else—and ourselves, what is there in common?" In the novel, Malraux answered the question in non-intellectual terms (the walnut trees); in *The Voices of Silence,* he answers in discursive terms—the museum without walls, the possibility of cultural continuity built on an analysis of historic metamorphosis.

The theme of the museum without walls even emerged in Malraux's Gaullism. In *The Case for DeGaulle,* he wrote, "The idea of a democratic culture, which seemed vague and suspect in the nineteenth century, has grown clear and valid in the twentieth century because of the development of the techniques for reproducing works of art." He then proposes that this discovery be made use of politically, that reproductions should be sent all over the world, "opening, to all comers, the doors of the cultural past." As a matter of fact, Malraux views DeGaulle as a cross between the political and the artistic hero. He describes him as some kind of a cultural hero. His Gaullism is only inexplicable if one maintains that his previous political novels were fundamentally socialist. In terms of the aristocracy of even his political heroes, and of the metamorphosis of his one hero, Malraux's Gaullism is considerably less mystifying.

The conclusion of *The Voices of Silence* is an affirmation of that immortality, of the escape from fate, which, in its various metamorphoses, is Malraux's major theme. He says of man, "Yet surely, no less important is the nothingness of which he seems to be the prey, if all the thousands of years piled above his dust are unable to stifle the voice of a great artist once he is in his coffin."

Thus the artist, like Kyo and Katov in *Man's Fate,* transcends death through an act of solidarity, though the act is now a painting rather than a revolution. The Pascalian situation is common to both. The type of answer is the same. No doubt the artist differs radically even from Malraux's kind of political hero. He is concerned with a universality far beyond that of historic revolution, and because of

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this he is the better able to escape death. As such, it is undeniable that Malraux's putting him forth as a hero represents a retreat from immediacy, a deepening of pessimism, an even more aristocratic and vicarious victory for man.

Yet the progression from political hero to artist is not linear—nor does Malraux's Gaullism represent a sharp break with his past. The artist-as-hero (Goya) is, at bottom, the same person as the political-as-hero (Garine) and DeGaulle, as seen by Malraux, has the characteristics of both. Thus, the term metamorphosis applies on many levels: to the identity of Malraux's heroes which is the same throughout successive transformations; to the meaning of heroism which is the escape from death. Where this process leads is impossible to say—although religion would be as good a guess as any.

To realize the action of this metamorphosis is not to make a critical estimation of the value of Malraux's work, or even of the pertinence of his various, and identical, heroes. It is to make a necessary act of the understanding, a clarification of meaning, which is the precondition to any discussion of Malraux. And this knowledge is just beginning.

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Robert Warshow

FILM CHRONICLE: A FEELING OF SAD DIGNITY

Beneath all the social meanings of Chaplin's art there is one insistent personal message that he is conveying to us all the time. It is the message of most entertainers, maybe, but his especially because he is so great an entertainer. "Love me"—he has asked this from the beginning, buttering us up with his sweet ways and his calculated graceful misadventures, with those exquisite manners so perfectly beside the point, with that honeyed glance he casts at us so often, lips pursed in an outrageous simper, eyebrows and mustache moving in frantic invitation. Love me. And we have, apparently, loved him, though with such undercurrents of revulsion as might be expected in response to so naked a demand.

Does he love us? This is a strange question to ask of an artist. But it is Chaplin himself who puts it in our mouths, harping on love until we are forced almost in self-defense to say: what about *you*? He does not love us; and maybe he doesn't love anything. Even in his most genial moments we get now and then a glimpse of how cold a heart has gone into his great blaze. Consider the scene in *City Lights* when he tactfully permits the blind girl to unravel his underwear in the belief that she is rolling up her knitting wool; the delicacy of feeling is wonderful, all right—who else could have conceived the need for this particular kindness?—but it is he, that contriving artist there, who has created the occasion for the delicacy in the first place. No, the warmth that comes from his image on the screen is only our happy opportunity to love him. He has no love to spare, he is too busy pushing his own demand: love *me,* love *me,* poor Charlie, sweet Charlie. Probably he even despises us because we have responded so readily to his blandishments, and also because we can never respond enough.

If there was any doubt before, surely *Monsieur Verdoux* made things clear. It gives us the Tramp no longer defeated by his graces but suddenly turning them to account, master of himself and all around him. And what is this mastery?—Verdoux is a murderer. I know very well that Verdoux is not the Tramp, but he rises from the ashes of

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the Tramp. In their separate ways they both represent the private life of cultivation and sensibility in its opposition to society with its crowds and wars and policemen. If the Tramp had an unconscious (which is not possible), it might make him dream of being Verdoux, for Verdoux's murders are committed so that he can carry on his own idyll with his own Blind Girl; it is true that the idyll is utterly overshadowed by the murders, but this may tell us as much about idylls as it does about murder. *Monsieur Verdoux* is a cold and brilliant movie, perhaps more brilliant than anything else ever done in the movies, but we must make a certain effort of will to like it, for it gives us no clear moral framework, no simple opportunities for sentiment, and not even, despite Verdoux's continual "philosophical" pronouncements, any discernible "message," but most of all an unremitting sensation of the absence of love. The effort should be made. It is no part of Chaplin's function as an artist to love us or anyone, and I do not offer these observations as a complaint.

But if *Monsieur Verdoux* was a disturbing experience for Chaplin's audience, it must have been a truly painful one for Chaplin himself. Sweet Charlie had changed his public personality, or at any rate had thrown off its more agreeable disguises, revealing what he must have thought a more serious and in that sense more "real" aspect of himself. And the experiment was apparently disastrous; nobody loved him any more: the "true" Chaplin was repulsive. There was even an organized campaign against the movie, which, though it ostensibly concentrated its fire on Chaplin's personal and political behavior, could be successful only because *Monsieur Verdoux* was so forbidding. When this campaign culminated some years later in the Attorney General's suggestion that Chaplin, then in Europe, might not be permitted to re-enter this country, there were surprisingly few Americans who cared. We can say easily enough that this is a national shame: once again America has rejected one of her great artists. And Chaplin, no doubt, is only too ready to say the same thing; he has said it, in fact, as crudely and stupidly as possible, by his recent acceptance of the "World Peace Prize." But for him, who has asked so insistently for our love, there must be more to it than that; there must be the possibility that he has given himself away.

Limelight, made during these years of the great comedian's disgrace and completed just before his departure for Europe, is his apology and, so far as he is capable of such a thing, his self-examination. "The story of a clown who has lost his funny-bone," he called it while it was being

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made, and he has tried to live up to the candor of this description, presenting himself to us from the "inside" so that we may understand what has happened to him and perhaps give him again the love he has forfeited. Of course it remains a question, with him as with any artist, whether there *is* an "inside"; candor is one of the tools of art. Certainly he does not confess to anything, nor can one imagine what he might confess to if he did. But it is clear at any rate that he asks for clemency. He even brings his five children into court to sway the jury (the three youngest, though they appear for only a moment, would go far with any jury I was on). He makes little mocking references to his personal fortunes: "I've had five wives already; one more or less doesn't bother me." And he smiles at us sweetly as he has done so often in the past, but more gently now as fits his years; only once, in some "imitations" of flowers and trees, does he fully recall the archaic elfishness of the Tramp.

Now and then, it is true, he shows his teeth: as individuals, he tells us, we may possibly be lovable, but in the mass we are "a monster without a head"; Chaplin has the gift of stating such "insights" as if they have occurred to him for the first time, thus somehow redeeming them from banality. But most of the time he is rather humble, acknowledging at least the main point: that he cares for our applause. "What a sad business it is, being funny!" says the Blind Girl of this movie, and Calvero replies with a wry smile: "Yes, it is—when they don't laugh." Then he tries to explain more profoundly: "As a man gets on, he wants to live deeply. A feeling of sad dignity comes over him, and that's fatal for a comic." There is a moment when Calvero, in a dream of his past greatness, stands receiving the applause of an audience; then the smile fades, giving place to a fixed mask of the most extreme sorrow, the applause dies, the theater is empty. Again we are aware of a banality that somehow does not matter. The scene is false—how often we have been asked to believe that the sorrows of a clown are deeper than all other sorrows!—but Chaplin has lived with the falsehood and is committed to it. Besides, the statements of a clown are always false, his gestures excessive, his mask painted out of all credibility. *After all,* we are supposed to say, there is something very real in all this—but only "after all."

Perhaps, then, if Chaplin is actually trying to tell the truth, he is trying what is not possible to him, and that is why we find ourselves uneasy in his altered presence. But I don't think he has made that mistake. He is only trying to tell a clown's truth, and the "inside" of a clown, if it exists, must be as distorted as the outside—at any rate if

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he is a thorough clown. Chaplin is among the subtlest of artists, but he is not corrupted by subtlety. His gestures remain broad, his statements marvelously simple and clear, his ideas self-confidently crude. When Calvero smells gas on entering his house, he looks first at the soles of his shoes to see whether he has stepped into dog's excrement. Even while he lectures on the Spirit of Life to the young girl he has saved from suicide, he remains primarily concerned with such distractions as the smell of kippered herring that has got onto his fingers—not exactly to underline what he is saying, though it has this effect, but simply because he knows a smell is always more arresting than an idea. And after all these past years of developing cinematic "art," Chaplin remains the most innocent of film technicians, using his camera only to seek the most direct means of exposition and his lighting only to illuminate; a clown's first task is to make his point unmistakably: if there is subtlety, it will come. What a world of sophistication has had to pass over Chaplin's head so that he may open this film with the epigraph, "The glamour of limelight, from which age must pass as youth enters. . . ."

Of course we would be wrong to take this epigraph entirely at face value. Chaplin often turns out to be more conscious of what he is doing than we suspect, and he has chosen to preserve the archaic tone. But with whatever reservations, he does certainly believe in what it expresses, in the "glamour of limelight"—which must mean the glamour of his own personality. It is true, perhaps, that he ought to be beyond that by now: we all know, don't we, that applause and "glamour" are not what really matter. But he is willing to admit he is not beyond it, just as he is willing to admit he can't keep his mind on the deeper questions of existence because of the smell of herring that clings to his hands. The joke is, of course, that we can't either: nobody ever gets "beyond" anything; that's probably the one joke there is in the world, and all the clowns have nothing to do but tell it to us over and over—no wonder they see no point in being anything but clear.

But though Calvero can never quite get away from the kippered herring, he keeps trying. Once awakened to the advantages of talking pictures, Chaplin in his last two movies has found it almost impossible to stop talking; it seems to have come upon him that he must bring forth all at once the stored-up wisdom of a lifetime. And like many who have thought to save their deepest statements for the last (Mark Twain is another example), Chaplin turns out to have nothing very illuminating to say; his true profundity is still in his silences. Verdoux, having discovered that men do not really live up to their moral ideas, not only drew the logical conclusion by becoming a murderer, but could not

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resist making little speeches about his discovery, continually poking us in the ribs for fear we might miss the point. In the end Verdoux turned out to be personally as vulnerable as his logic, and that saved the comedy, though one couldn't be sure how much of Chaplin had gone down with Verdoux. Calvero, quite as much a man of the world as Verdoux and sharing his slightly questionable elegance and half-baked independence of mind, is a more agreeable philosopher, preaching not murder but tolerance, vitality, and love. Yet his tone is not very different; like Verdoux, he is over-impressed with his ideas and must be always laboring the point. Now and then he strikes a real spark: "That's all any of us are—amateurs. We don't live long enough to be anything else." More often he can only make a good try: "Life is a desire, not a meaning." Dying, Calvero can leave us only with this: "The heart and the mind—what an enigma!" Is it this kind of thing the Tramp might have been wanting to say during those years of his silence?

I suppose it is, and I suppose it might have been better if we had never found out. But now that Chaplin has broken the silence, I confess I do not find these platitudes of his quite so distressing or inappropriate as, perhaps, I ought to. To be a clown is not an art of detachment. With whatever deliberation he may contrive his effects, in the end the clown must submit *personally* to humiliation, receiving a custard pie in his own face, falling on his own behind. Even though the fall is not so painful as it looks, it is still a real fall. Every clown, no doubt, dreams that because he has practiced the fall in advance it will not truly touch him, his essential being will remain upright; this is the source of that "tragedy" of a clown's life that we have heard so much about. But if he is a true clown, then his essential being is precisely what consents to the fall, and we who refuse to separate him from his role are more right than he is.

In *Limelight,* as in *Monsieur Verdoux,* Chaplin has got caught in this paradox. He has grown reluctant to submit directly to humiliation and is anxious to be accepted as something "more" than a clown; this is the "feeling of sad dignity" that he speaks of. It is true he also takes great pride in being a clown, but pride itself he uses as a means to deny his identity: we become aware of him suddenly as belonging to a "tradition." Of course there *is* a "tradition" and Chaplin is its highest embodiment, but when he presents himself in that role he has to that extent violated it. He is never more dignified, never less a clown, than in the scenes where he appears as a street singer, dressed handsomely in motley, passing a hat for pennies, thoroughly at ease because he has come back to his roots. "This is the only true theater," he says gesturing at the street and the world; the statement is true as it has always been,

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and he makes it with the authority that belongs to him, but there is something questionable in his making such a statement at all: it would come better from us who watch him.

Verdoux, despite his pretensions, was still basically a figure of absurdity, clearly unable to understand how one must get along; in his way he was just as "innocent" as the Tramp. Calvero, on the other hand, is not supposed to be in himself a clownish figure, he is just a clown by profession. In fact there must be such a division in Chaplin's personality; if there weren't, he would be insane. But his function as an artist is to demonstrate that in some fundamental sense the division is a false one; when he succeeds in obliterating it, as he was able to do entirely in the character of the Tramp and very largely even as Verdoux, he is closest to the kind of truth that most intimately belongs to him and most deeply implicates his audience. In *Limelight* he makes it very clear that he knows this. But, again, his knowledge is not what counts; a clown knows nothing, he only exists. Finding it necessary to make a direct examination of his problem as an artist, Chaplin is forced to repeat in the structure of the movie itself that division between reality and comedy, between dignity and drunkenness, which is the problem the movie deals with. The scenes of actual clowning are presented simply as stage performances, a kind of documentation of the case of the clown Calvero who has "lost his funny-bone," whereas the movie proper, so to speak, is only occasionally funny, and never very much.

The most disturbing thing about Verdoux was that one did not always know how much he was supposed to be accepted on his own terms, how much Chaplin himself was implicated in Verdoux's murders. With Calvero we are left in no such uncertainty: he is Charles Chaplin "in person" presiding at the telling of his own story and not for a moment relinquishing control. If Chaplin is willing in the role of Calvero to acknowledge his own sense of failure, it is only while making it plain that he will be the one to define what is meant by failure. If he has Calvero die breathing that lame little sentence about the enigma of the heart and the mind, it is not because he sees the sentence as dramatically appropriate, but because he thinks it expresses in itself a profound philosophical and poetic truth. The trouble is that it undeniably does, and there seems to be nothing in Chaplin's education or sensibility to tell him what the sentence lacks. And yet, whatever might be true of his education, has he not shown us over and over a sensibility a hundred times more delicate than our own?

Here we come back to that coldness of heart which seems to belong inextricably to Chaplin's genius. It must often have been said of him

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that he is an embodiment of childhood, and it is perfectly true. His perceptions have the eccentricity of viewpoint and the almost dazzling detailed clarity of a child's perceptions, and carry similar suggestions of unspecific and perhaps unintended depth. His feelings are as definite and as strong as a child's, and as irresistibly appealing. But like a child he is also imprisoned within the limits of his own needs and understanding, and can express no true relation with others. Precisely the lack of such a relation is what makes him a clown—the most childish kind of entertainer—and gives him his clown's subject matter. What is the Tramp but the greatest of all egotists?—an outcast by choice refusing to take the least trouble to understand his fellow men, and yet contriving by his unshakable detachment to put everyone else in the wrong, transforming his rejection of society into society's rejection of him. The Tramp can draw close only to those who are outsiders like him: children, animals, the Blind Girl—the maimed and the innocent. And in the end he is always walking away into the depths of the screen with his back turned. Verdoux, instead of protecting the lonely and innocent, preys on them, though the difference is not so absolute as it might seem: he is just as much a sentimentalist as the Tramp, as he demonstrates in sparing the life of one woman merely because he is touched by her history and because she has read Schopenhauer; and even for his victims he has a kind of icy kindness which might be one of the things that attract them.

Calvero, combining Verdoux's doubtful *savoir faire* with the Tramp's sweetness, is neither the victim of his world nor its victimizer, but a kind of benevolent observer with all the threads of life held loose in his hands. Though we come upon him when he is no longer successful as a performer, he has failed by becoming too good for his audience, too "dignified," not by falling below it. Besides, he is the only one who understands his failure, or if he doesn't exactly understand it, at least his tolerant acceptance of it takes the place of understanding. There has been a significant change in the role of the Blind Girl—this time not blind, of course, but lonely, defeated, and suffering from a functional paralysis of the legs. Having saved her from suicide and reluctantly taken her into his lodgings, Calvero in a few minutes of psychoanalysis discovers the cause of her paralysis and proceeds to cure it. Soon she becomes a ballet star. This moment of her success is when the Tramp would have found himself rejected. But now the girl makes a declaration of love—that declaration which the Tramp never had the courage to make for himself—and though Calvero lets himself be persuaded for a time, it is he who eventually refuses; he must be the one to decide

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who loves whom, and he has settled it that she belongs to the young composer (a part played by Chaplin's son). This is no very great renunciation, nor indeed is it presented as one. Calvero has simply avoided an entanglement as the Tramp always did, and he has bettered the Tramp by accomplishing this in such a way as to emphasize his own attractiveness. When he has gone away and the girl after many months finds him again to say she still loves him, he replies with magnificent candor: "Of course you do. You always will."

It is easy to believe him, too, for no one else in the movie is allowed to rival his charm and the mature strength of his presence, or even to become real. The girl herself, though she takes her place readily enough in the gallery of Chaplin's heroines, has less independent power than any who have preceded her. Chiefly, her function is to listen attentively, to offer herself as a passive object for his benevolence, and, since she is not actually blind, to look at him with adoration as once the Tramp would have looked at her; the looks Calvero casts back at her are looks of kindness. As for the young man, his function is to be young and nothing more. Calvero will give way to him because age must give way to youth, fathers must give way to sons, the "glamour of limelight" cannot last forever; that is the theme of the movie. But again Chaplin sets his own terms, and if he yields, it is only in principle: between the young man's stiff, undifferentiated "youth" and Calvero's lively and self-assured "age," there can be no real contest. It is Calvero whom the girl will always love—"of course."

Only among the minor characters is the color of reality allowed to emerge: in the frowzy, small-minded landlady, and in her dreadful friend who appears for just a few seconds and says nothing; in an armless music-hall performer encountered in a bar (later cut out of the film); and most of all in the self-contained, almost grotesquely prosaic street musicians who keep reappearing through the movie as representatives both of the hard everyday world where one must make a living as one can and of the "universal" world of art. In his treatment of these marginal figures Chaplin comes closest to a free and disinterested feeling for others; he could not have made such honest and simple use of them without a certain kind of love, even if this love is expressed sometimes only in the pitilessness of his observation.

The peculiarly stilted quality that troubles one in *Limelight* comes, then, not from any failure of sensibility but from a further narrowing of the field of associations and sympathies in which Chaplin's sensibility can operate, and from a consequent suppression of drama. The Tramp, despite his ultimate frigidity, at least maintained an active flirtation with

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the world, always escaping in the end but keeping up the excitement of the chase and even hinting strongly that he might like to be caught if only he did not like more to get away. Verdoux, having turned his frigidity into a means of making a living, is necessarily involved with the world from the start, though he tries hard to claim he is not; and he does get caught, to have his head cut off—which is possibly the kind of thing the Tramp was afraid might happen. Calvero is too self-contained either to commit murder like Verdoux or to run away like the Tramp; it would be undignified. He simply does not let anyone approach him. Certainly the five wives have left no traces; the pictures on Calvero's walls are pictures of himself. When the girl is practically forced on him, he hastens to proclaim his detachment (". . . one more or less doesn't bother me") and to lay down the terms of their relation, which is to be "platonic." It does not appear that this prescription is ever violated.

Thus Calvero stands alone on the stage—in the fading "limelight" —and does not so much play out his personal drama as expound it. In the very tones of his voice one can feel his refusal to communicate dramatically. The girl, to whom he does most of his talking, is often little more than a point in space toward which he may orient himself; his words pass over and beyond her—they are not really intended for her at all. At bottom they are probably not even intended for us in the audience—the "monster without a head"—though, like the girl, we are allowed to listen and expected to admire. It is as if the whole movie were one of those dreams in which Calvero, trying to reassert his identity, dreams not of *being* on the stage but of *seeing* himself on the stage. He is his own audience, and his "inside," even to him, is only a mirror image of the outside. When he speaks, it is to hear his voice re-echoing within the isolation of his own being. How could he possibly have learned to sense when his words and postures begin to be false?—he has never watched the faces of those he has pretended to be talking to.

But I am not willing to leave it at that. It is not at all necessary that a clown should be in a true relation with others, or even that he should always be funny; the only necessity is that he should fail and that there should be moments when we are able to imagine that his failure is, "after all," a kind of success. Calvero's failure is clear enough: he cannot get us to take him seriously in the way he wants to be taken. We believe as much as he does in "Life" and the "miracle of consciousness"; it is an impertinence for him to lecture us about these things unless he can be eloquent, and eloquence is beyond him: all he can

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do is suggest the need for eloquence without ever really attaining it. Even his jokes are too often labored and stuffy. "What can the stars do?" he asks in his discourse on consciousness. "Nothing!—sit around on their axes." To hear this from the greatest comedian in the world!

But is his failure also a kind of success? I can only say it is possible to see it that way. I have no convincing argument to advance against those who see *Limelight* as no more than a crude structure of self-pity and banal "philosophy" interspersed here and there with glimpses of a past greatness. But the crudities of a great artist always have an extra dimension; Chaplin cannot so easily divest himself of his talent no matter how he may blunder. Nor can we divest ourselves of the sense of his presence, perhaps one might say his "tradition": the face and body that move before us on the screen have belonged also for all these years to the Tramp, and then to Verdoux; even the voice and the words come somehow not unexpected. This is an extra-aesthetic element, maybe, but there it is. One way or another, the movies are always forcing us outside the boundaries of art; this is one source of their special power. And of Chaplin perhaps it could even be said that in some sense he has never been an artist at all—though he is full of arts—but always and only a presence.

Calvero's failure has at least this in common with the Tramp's failure and Verdoux's: he fails in dead earnest and with a straight face, intelligently prepared for failure, it is true, but not for the particular kind of failure that comes to him, and never dreaming that his essential worth can be called into doubt. He is an honest bankrupt, so to speak, doing his best to the very end and concealing no assets; it just happens that the money in his vault is in some way devalued—not exactly counterfeit, but not altogether sound either. And yet there is something in the confidence with which he hands it over that makes one hesitate to examine it closely, at least in his presence. Suppose he should demand to see what money *we* are paying our debts with? "We're all grubbing for a living, the best of us," Calvero says once, and he is right as usual, though uninspired. For he does manage in spite of everything to implicate us in his failure. He does it not by detachment and true insight—as he might do if he were the projection of a "real" artist instead of a clown—but, on the contrary, by the hopeless depth of his own involvement; by his suspicious eagerness to have us look into his messy, unilluminating, and amateurishly doctored account books; and above all by the irresistible, brilliant purity of his egotism.

Nothing escapes the deflecting force of this uncompromising self-absorption. When Calvero philosophizes, he puts all philosophy under

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a cloud. Falling miles short of the kind of profundity he wants, he achieves instead a clown's profundity: we are moved not by what he says, but by his desire to speak. If he ends up with nothing but a worn-out "enigma"—well, so do the real philosophers. Supposing he were to ask us how one enigma can be better than another, could we give him a clear answer? The gap between Calvero and the philosophers is enormous, but in such gaps a clown has his victories: as Calvero gropes confidently in his darkness, it occurs to one finally that this gap between him and the philosophers is nothing compared to the gap between the philosophers and the truth. Again, when Calvero rhapsodizes on the "miracle of consciousness," he manages to suggest not only that we are all responding to life inadequately, but at the same time, by his aggressive "sincerity," that consciousness may be some kind of fake—and also that the possibility of its being a fake does not matter. And when he speaks with his most genuine emotion about love while demonstrating his own impenetrable isolation, and in his "secondary" role as a performer deflates his own sentiment with a savage little song consisting only of a meaningless repetition of the word "love," then he is striking at us very deeply, for at bottom we all fear we are incapable of love, and that what we call love is only something we wish to receive from others. That Chaplin himself is as much a "victim" in all this as we who watch him is only the completion of the irony. A clown's function is to be ridiculous and to make the world ridiculous with him. In this, Calvero has his success.

It remains to be said, nevertheless, that the famous scene near the end of the movie when Calvero performs on the stage as a comic violinist, with Buster Keaton as his accompanist, represents a kind of success far beyond the complex and unsteady ironies of the earlier parts. In this there is no longer any problem of interpretation and choice, no "victims" and no victories, no shifting of involvements back and forth between the performer and his role and his audience, no society, no egotism, no love or not-love, no ideas—only a perfect unity of the absolutely ridiculous. Perhaps the Tramp's adventure with the automatic feeding machine in *Modern Times* is as funny, but there it is still possible to say that something is being satirized and something else, therefore, upheld. The difficulties that confront Calvero and Keaton in their gentle attempt to give a concert are beyond satire. The universe stands in their way, and not because the universe is imperfect, either, but just because it exists; God himself could not conceive a universe in which these two could accomplish the simplest thing without mishap.

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It is not enough that the music will not stay on its rack, that the violin cannot be tuned, that the piano develops a kind of malignant disease—the violinist cannot even depend on a minimal consistency in the behavior of his own body. When, on top of all the other misfortunes that can possibly come upon a performer humbly anxious to make an impression, it can happen also that one or both of his legs may capriciously grow shorter while he is on the stage, then he is at the last extreme: nothing is left. Nothing except the deep, sweet patience with which the two unhappy musicians accept these difficulties, somehow confident—out of God knows what reservoir of awful experience—that the moment will come at last when they will be able to play their piece. When that moment does come, it is as happy a moment as one can hope for in the theater. And it comes to us out of that profundity where art, having become perfect, seems no longer to have any implications. The scene is unendurably funny, but the analogies that occur to me are tragic: Lear's "Never, never, never, never, never!" or Kafka's "It is enough that the arrows fit exactly in the wounds they have made."

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BOOKS

POETS OF THE '50s*

As the '50s wear on, and comedians of the order of Chaplin and Fields are replaced by comedians entitled Red Buttons and Mr. Peepers, everyone knows that the climate has changed. We live in the shadow of our new set of Fathers as Jonson and Dryden had to live in the shadow of the Elizabethans. Poetry has become altogether less explosive and more cool, professional and overtly imperturbable. The young leap to conclusions as a babe to his bottle and start their thinking at those platonic termini which the fathers reached after considerable struggle. The best of the younger poets show a talent for compromise rather than conformity, for synthesis rather than mimicry, and have a voice and a spirit entirely their own. But just because they are not to be facilely defined in terms of the echoes they set up in the mind of a practiced reader, this spirit is as difficult to describe as that of their explosive forebears.

Is it not logical that one of the most striking aspects of their work, from a cultural-historical point of view anyway, should be the deliberate avoidance, not of explosiveness altogether, but of those kinds which distinguished the '20s and have tended to become dogma in the aftermath? A homely truth, but apparently not an obvious one. There are many kinds of explosion: to one poet it meant diction, to another imagery, to another individual words, to another thought and attitude. To the best of them it meant several explosions in concert. Allen Tate's line "From one peeled aster drenched with the wind all day . . ." is

* UNDERCLIFF. By Richard Eberhart. Oxford University Press. $4.00.
POEMS: A SELECTION. By Léonie Adams. Funk and Wagnalls. $3.00.
POEMS, 1940-1953. By Karl Shapiro. Random House. $3.00.
AN ARMADA OF THIRTY WHALES. By Daniel G. Hoffman. Yale Series of Younger Poets, Yale University Press. $2.50.
POETS OF TODAY: POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS by Harry Duncan, SAMURAI AND SERPENT POEMS by Murray Noss, ANOTHER ANIMAL: POEMS by May Swenson. Scribner's. $3.50.
THE DANCING BEARS. By W. S. Merwin. Yale University Press. $2.75.
A SUMMONING OF STONES. By Anthony Hecht. Macmillan. $2.50.
THE DEATH BELL. By Vernon Watkins. New Directions. $3.00.

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a famous case in point. Winters snorted at what he took to be the meaninglessness of "peeled"; yet he saw well enough what Tate was attempting in this early poem ("Death of Little Boys") which tried, with the immense ambition of the '20s, to compress all life and all tragedy into one short lyric. It was decidedly pitiful that the aster should have been peeled; only pedants asked why. I am not being facetious. This recklessness was of the essence. Just lately, reviewing his collected poems, Tate praised Winters for having the same sort of explosiveness, though (one expects Tate would agree) more subtly and understandably than "peeled."

To see the change in its strongest light, one has only to compare Harry Duncan's temperate translations of Dante, or Vernon Watkins' translation of Heine's *The North Sea,* with Pound's recent version of *The Trachinians.* The Pound is one long sputtering explosion, set off, to be sure, by some of his finest lyrics. The exquisitely bare 'poetry' of Eliot's late comedies might even be called an explosion in reverse, an apocalyptic energy of exclusion for which the younger poets have neither the power nor the inclination. Nevertheless, it is to Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Stevens and the other modern 'exotics' that the younger poets look. Critics like Hillyer, short-sighted literalists of the tradition, turned their own laziness into a principle of form, failing to see that Pound and Eliot had directed the famous American scientific conscience for the first time on the whole past of Western poetry, making a radical generosity out of what looked superficially like snobbery. It was the only possible advance beyond ballad-sentimentality and little-song-sentimentality and the only escape from the hyper-gentility of the school of Bridges. The point is worth making again if only because Hillyer's *First Principles of Verse* is a useful beginner's handbook and because his closing portrait of the expatriate bogeyman is such a ludicrous mistake.

The best of Léonie Adams and Richard Eberhart is of the spirit of the '20s *pur sang.* Eberhart, whose best quality is a sort of reckless, hale exuberance, seems to have increased his range by submitting to more influences, chiefly Stevens. Léonie Adams, on the whole, has retreated into a quieter, more private, meditative and somewhat incoherent manner strongly influenced (one guesses) by Emily Dickinson. Both poets have a distinction of mind which carries them through some passages of indistinct visualization, dubious grammar and hazy metrical practice. They are perhaps more impressive in the round than in part; few poems have their whole quality, but few are without some admirable lines. They show how much good poetry can be written without

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adding anything decisive to the sensibility of the time, and, particularly in Eberhart's case, how much charm can result from a very deliberate practice of poetry for poetry's sake, variety for variety's sake, style for style's sake. Eberhart is too lavish with his rhetorical questions and too frugal with distinctively *poetic* answers. Miss Adams is too modest and private to ravish or command. But both have a highly refreshing security in their profession and are major witnesses if not major voices. In Richard Wilbur's words, their subject is "the spirit and its visions," the noblest subjects, if not always the most timely or commanding.

In the socialized parlance of the '30s, Mr. Shapiro is a much more "committed" poet than Adams or Eberhart. Some of his poems writhe in an agonized limbo of commitment; committed to everything they end up committed to little more than the twin ideas of commitment and detachment, floating in a solution of good-natured wit. What is one to make of a poem on "The Fly" which starts "O hideous little bat, the size of snot"? or one on "The Haircut" which starts "O wonderful nonsense of lotions of Lucky Tiger"? or one on the "Buick" which starts "As a sloop with a sweep of immaculate wing on her delicate spine . . ."? The balance of such poems busies itself with apologizing for these convulsive invocations. Something disarming in this embracement of the chronically common, but something frustrating also, and in several confessional moments, something cloying and coy. Too many of these poems are an anxious rehearsal of themes on which Shapiro has little of interest to say. The fact remains, however, that he is one of the most gifted of living poets. Given a subject which frees his genius for the somberly and soberly concrete—"Elegy For a Dead Soldier," "The Conscientious Objector," "October 1," "In the Waxworks," "Terminal," "Israel," "Going to School"—he speaks for his thousands and his tens of thousands. His irony is incidental rather than overmastering. The very best poems in the book—a beautifully concrete, subtle and well-modulated series on "Adam and Eve"—are the least ironic.

The "imagist" tradition of everyday life continues to bear fruit. If, as Pound once wrote Dr. Williams, Williams' genius lies in his opacity, then his descendants have not inherited this genius. Their poems don't vibrate in quite such a defiant contrast to the prevailing modes. But the solid success of Mr. Noss's little Japanese episodes and Mr. Hoffman's first book points back to Williams. Mr. Hoffman doesn't attempt very much, but is musical, witty, exuberant, original, easy, well-disciplined, and seems to take his minority as a sort of blessing. Mr.

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Noss is discipline incarnate, building up with little poetic byplay a maximum of quiet conviction, in these original poems which read like expert translations of a perceptive Japanese poet, one with less pathos than usual but much engaging presentment. (After three years at West Point and three as an officer in Okinawa and Japan, Mr. Noss had the imagination to study with Lowell at Iowa and Shapiro at Johns Hopkins.)

Scribner's notion of clapping three dissimilar poets together under one hat, however embarrassing to the reviewer, is probably a good idea if the poets agreed to it. Miss Swenson is a scholiast of the experimental. Her poems make all kinds of patterns on the page, go in heavily for imitative action, are active to the verge of apoplexy. Every line bristles with determination to *do something* about poetry, to hoist it off its stodgy rump. Some, indeed, are wonderfully and fearfully basic. But the net effect, I'm afraid, is glassy. Alongside Miss Swenson's kinaesthesia, Mr. Duncan's "own" poems snore comfortably and learnedly away in their iambic torpor. His best work is translation of some of Dante's less well known canzoni, some Rilke, Baudelaire and Apollinaire, and it is very good indeed, in the very best, self-effacing, craftsmanlike style of what promises to be a distinguished age of translation. He is equally adept in the jazz idiom of Apollinaire and the grave intricacy of the Dante.

In W. S. Merwin's second volume we reach what is probably an apogee of the nonexplosive ideal. Some of these poems achieve a fine ecstasy of attenuation, dreamily fingering a great array of Yeatsian properties and discarding them before they have a chance to solidify. Much of it is Yeats dipped in a strong bleaching solution of late Stevens; the bloody symbols of the Aesthetic Movement decently veiled in gauze. Mr. Merwin has developed a unique kind of metaphorical modesty. I don't think that with the best will one can help being irritated by this extreme rarefaction, if one attempts to read the book through at one sitting; ingenuousness can become a drug on the market, particularly today. But Merwin has all the virtue of ingenuousness and something more; a true and delicate (though so far self-indulgent) ear, and a versatile musicality. He is nearly always engaging even if he doesn't yet leave much deposit in the mind. "Runes For a Round Table," "When I Came From Colchis," "Proteus" and the third "Canso" are superior poems, successful new departures that still blink a little in the clear new light of coherence.

Anthony Hecht belongs to the courtly tradition, and is our latest and happiest answer to Baudelaire's libel that "The protestant countries

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lack two elements indispensable to the happiness of a well-bred man: gallantry and devotion." In addition to its wit, its complexity and its high musical qualities, Mr. Hecht's poetry is notably generous and open. The gentlemanly virtues are sublimated into gesture. To maintain this spirit in our acid atmosphere, a poet needs the gift of radical irony. All his truths must be provisional on the conditions and premises established in the poem. Early Cummings had this quality, though somewhat desperate and surly. Ransom has it pre-eminently. In no other young poet has it a wider or more cheerful range than in Hecht, nowhere is it more blithe or baroque.

KATHARSIS

The king rose up one morning from his bed
Naming his humors, as was his scholarly style,
And finding above all a viscid bile
Predominated, called for his newlywed,
And with an axe relieved her of her head,
Showing in this that man, however vile,
May through das Ewig-Weibliche *revile*
And purge his foulness by her gentle stead.

On that same morning rose up also he
Whose violence had been of lesser scope,
Yet should by stern and eminent decree
Greet his purgation at an end of rope;
He knew no lady, no devoted she
Whose intercession would fulfill the trope.

After Yeats's ear on the dish, we are scarcely meant to be shocked by this. The tale is grim but the tone is easy. Poise, weight, variety, ease, wit, economy and unforced distinction of phrasing—all these things are present in Hecht to an unusual degree. Best of all, I should say, is the sense of spaciousness and reserve. A poem like "Alceste in the Wilderness," with its Websterian *mortisme,* manages to balance a (probably) insoluble obscurity against such a rich texture of image and sound that our normal demands for coherence are satisfied. This is a rare achievement in any poet and puts Hecht in the highest modern company.

Vernon Watkins is a Welshman, a friend of the late Dylan Thomas. New Directions has previously published a *Selected Poems* (from his first two books) and an admirable translation of Heine's *The North Sea,* with German facing. Like W. S. Graham he represents the new class of brilliant but rather staid British provincial writers. More even

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than Mr. Hecht, he has tamed his masters—Wordsworth, Hölderlin, Hopkins, Thomas and late Eliot, for the most part. Like Wordsworth he is musical in a sturdily iambic fashion; like Thomas and Hopkins he is lavish and elaborate in his imagery. He is a Christian platonist of the sea, finding in the life of the Welsh seacoast innumerable images of permanence and change, death and resurrection. He is also, in the best possible sense, a pietist, a prophet of natural energies and the analogous life of the spirit. This may sound banal as I describe it; actually it is not. This kind of poetry has its serious shortcomings, of course. Being always more or less at its goal, dramatic only faintly, in the playing of one element of ecstatic vision against another, it tends to blur fairly often, to become clotted with significance and too much chiming. The title poem in 3-stress rhyming couplets seems, in spite of good passages, to suffer from all these defects.

The last, most solemn fires
Teach us that no desires
Can bless as theirs can bless
Who gave the wilderness
The dignity of line
From doctrine pounded fine.

This is more tidy and didactic than Thomas, certainly; tidiness and didacticism are his chief pitfalls—or a scatter-brained diffuseness. His faults, however, are a small part of the story. There is handsomely conceived and executed poetry in this book, nothing quite equaling his masters but a good deal worthy of their tradition. "Niobe" is an entire success—a Wordsworthian ode invoking the nature and destiny of a sea-encircled rock, in 205 varied lines of considerable force and beauty.

Death in our life, Job, Winter, Niobe,
O mountain-rock that first imagined sea,
Tragedy, we have learnt from lives that pass,
Can, like a note of music, break time's glass;
And we, on whom destruction like a sword
Hangs, in dark fission and the atomic cloud,
Marvel to see the spirit of your grey spars
Guarding a glory nature had denied.
If death is measured by the truth we hide
And solace by the love that moves the stars,
Under time's cry, the seabird's constant flying,
Dropping your plummet to the utmost deep
Where worlds and grains turn over in their sleep,
Teach us the folds of truth, and your true dying.

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Seldom has the pathetic fallacy seemed less fallacious. These lines are a summary of themes elaborated elsewhere in the poem and throughout the book. It is a poetry which, for all its echoes, comes out of the moment, and out of a vividly experienced world.

R. W. Flint

TURGENEV AND HIS PEERS

TURGENEV: A LIFE. By David Magarshack. Grove Press. $6.00.

In the present generation the last of the seven[1] great figures in Russian literature to be in need of renewed understanding and appraisal is Ivan Turgenev. The list extends from Pushkin to Alexander Blok, and the period, not unlike the stretch of time during the creation of a great dramatic art in ancient Greece, was less than a hundred years. To English and American readers Turgenev was the first of the major Russian writers whose name was generally known, so well known that Prince Mirsky in the mid-1920s was able to speak of him as a Victorian novelist. *A Sportsman's Notebook* appeared in English as early as 1855; his *Virgin Soil,* written in the late 1870s, was immediately translated, accepted and approved as a fashionable, topical European novel in London, Boston and New York. Today it is more appropriate to place Turgenev, though his best writings were in prose, between the names of two poets, Pushkin and Blok.

An opportunity to revise impressions of Turgenev's stature appears in David Magarshack's well-knit and sober biography, *Turgenev: A Life.* Its primary merit is that it provides sufficient evidence to show how distinctly autobiographical much of Turgenev's writings were; and through this study of his life one is led back, in fact, persuaded, to renew a reading of Turgenev's stories and novellas. In this perspective Turgenev is less of a Victorian ancestor than a Russian Proust, carrying with him throughout his long career touchstones of childhood and adolescent memories. The generally known facts of Turgenev's life assume new importance: both his parents were of landed Russian gentry, the father a handsome, cool-tempered army officer, the mother a plain-featured, domineering woman who after suffering the cruelties of a sadistic stepfather, turned her passions for vengeance and love of power upon the members of her household. Her rule was absolute. Ivan Turgenev, her second son, had the advantage of occupying a middle position in the family; direct responsibilities and blows were less likely to fall

1 The seven are Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Blok.

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on his broad shoulders; there were moments of freedom from the restless tyranny of his mother and he was permitted to hold a place of comparative neutrality in family quarrels. His father's early death hastened his maturity and the need of escape from his mother's dominance foreshadowed his many years of exile from Russia. For Turgenev the act of living away from home has its analogy to Proust's seclusion while writing *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu,* and with Proust he shared a long-sustained tendency toward hypochondria.

In this known picture Magarshack fills in the important detail of the young Turgenev's romantic attachment to the philosophy of Hegel, which included a friendship with Bakunin and Bakunin's sister. Turgenev's earliest attempts at writing were in Byronic dramatic verse. His early choice of Byron as a model was a natural affinity; being of the gentry it was easy enough for him to identify himself with the English milord who had written of the wandering Childe Harold and Don Juan —and Byron was the most notorious exile of his day. Following the lead of Pushkin, Turgenev shared Russian enthusiasm for what was fashionable in English Regency literature; as W. M. Praed became a hidden tutor of the speed and brilliance in Pushkin's verse, so Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee,* Anglo-Irish and pre-Victorian ventures into "the social novel," provided Turgenev with hints toward the writing of *A Sportsman's Notebook.* However limited such influences and examples may have been their contributions were definite and penetrating. The literature of England's Regency period, which included the novels of Sir Walter Scott, held exotic and fashionable appeal to at least two generations of Russian writers. In his later years Turgenev was to confess an admiration for the writings of George Eliot and Dickens, but this admiration was scarcely more than an accession to his general knowledge of current literature; the figures of Byron and Maria Edgeworth were of clear affinity to what he, as an absentee landlord himself, had to say.

The larger motives for Turgenev's exile can be easily understood: the need for freedom from his mother's tyranny, the Byronic legend and the intellectual's, the artist's protest against Russian bureaucracy, censorship and the Czar. Turgenev's income from his mother's estate allowed for extraordinary freedom in living away from home. It is the use that Turgenev made of that freedom which is important, which brought him closer to exiles of temperament like Flaubert, and to Henry James's double vision of Europe and America, than to the political exiles from his own country.

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Outwardly, socially Turgenev demanded a world in which the conventions of worldly and gentlemanly conduct prevailed; his softness of manner, his weak voice, in notorious contrast to his tall commanding presence in a room, his aristocratic yet sincere humility all belonged to his external being; they concealed the literary statesman of which both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy were aware and in their view of his social and political diplomacies, their perception of his skill was a continuing source of irritation. Turgenev could bend and weave like a funereal willow in a storm, but he did not break; he was enslaved by Pauline Viardot, yet he exacted from her a singular respect for loyalties of friendship as well as moments of violent passion.

What Turgenev represented either at home or abroad was a new phenomenon, scarcely discerned even among the greatest of his Russian contemporaries—the artist as a man of sensibility. This distinction drew him in the direction of Symbolism in which the arts of suggestion and association are employed. Consciously enough Turgenev translated his poetic impulses and perceptions into prose, creating for his readers the effect of lyrical nuances and intensities—the art that in Walter Pater's phrase "aspired to a condition of music," and in Turgenev's prose sustained the music of the writer's voice.

To the naked eye the man of sensibility is almost never the hero in a scene of action; unlike his romantic ancestors, his Byrons and his Pushkins, he is more frequently a victim of well-nourished illnesses and a physical coward—and Turgenev was both. A famous legend ran: Soon after young Turgenev stepped on board the *S. S. Nicholas I* en route to Berlin via Stettin on the Baltic, the ship caught fire. A passenger heard him plead in his strange womanish voice, "For God's sake, save me—I'm my mother's only son!" Whether literally true or false the story had enough psychological truth in it to delight his critics, including Dostoevsky, and to annoy Turgenev for many years, forcing him to write, even as he approached death, his own modified version of the incident. Yet the story is of a piece with his excessive modesty; on reading his work aloud to his Russian friends and critics before publication he would listen calmly to their instructions to burn it. The point is that he did not follow their advice nor did he have any intention of doing so.

These symptoms were also of a piece with his internal convictions and discriminations, with his early evolutions through eighteenth-century social enlightenment, pantheism, Hegelian idealism into acutely observant discovery of his own world; his concern was with the finer grains of moral conduct, the hidden strength of unseen or inarticulate emotions, the truth revealed in lips telling a lie, and in *A Sportsman's*

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Notebook, the association of natural phenomena with human action, the outward innocence of natural beauty and the transformation of it as one learns its warnings. Turgenev at his best is nondidactic, and for the reader he temporarily suspends all intellectual questions of belief and nonbelief; it is enough to know that whatever happens seems inevitable. One clear example of this aspect of Turgenev's genius is in "Bezhin Meadow," that chapter in *A Sportsman's Notebook* which opens on a pastoral Russian midsummer evening and extends its length through ghost stories told by boys around a camp fire: its actual content is the premonition of death arriving in the heart of summer—that is the story. And one can see why Henry James gave it his highest marks of favor. But the same art of association enters the last chapter of *On the Eve*: the scene is Venice; a cold spring wind blown from the east across the Adriatic tosses the waters of the Grand Canal; as evening falls the richly embossed city fades in cold gray winds; the novel's hero, Insarov, a Bulgarian revolutionary, and its heroine, Elena, are on their way from Russia to join the general uprising of the Slavic countries against elder, even more ancient tyrannies; but Insarov is dying, his ardor spent; he is warmed only by the youth, the courage of his wife. In these few pages Turgenev conveys the idealism, the fire that illuminate all hopes of a better world, the dangers of the fight to make it so, shown in Elena's dream before Insarov's death, the dream itself a storm at sea, and last, the cold wind filling the bedchamber. The scene is the beginning, the middle, the end of all such adventures; its youthful actors vanish into nameless middle age or death itself, only the cold spring endures which may be read as either the beginning or the gray end of an era. It is this complex of feelings and premonitions that gives the closing pages of *On the Eve* an enduring quality; beyond its value as an historical novel, it carries within it the cyclic character of life.

Magarshack does much to illuminate the well-known quarrels that Turgenev had with Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and from his newly acquired facts certain hidden sources of the quarrels may be brought to light. Antipathy between Dostoevsky and Turgenev went deeper than any immediate incident; the subterranean force in Dostoevsky's life was that of a religious temperament; his final concerns were with the absolutes of faith. How to live, what to do? was Tolstoy's greatest question, a question which in theory denied art and all its servants. Turgenev's suspensions of belief; his rooted, almost feminine discernment, his non-religious character, his inability, in short, "to take a stand" placed him at variance with his two great friends and enemies. He had written

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no novel which had the physical magnitude of *War and Peace* or of *The Brothers Karamazov*. The very nature of his true position rested in his not seeming to write "great works," but rather of being particularly objective, of allowing his genius for acute observation to have its say.

The position he had attained through the publication of *A Sportsman's Notebook, Rudin, On the Eve, A House of Gentlefolk* and *Fathers and Children* established his reputation in Europe as well as among his Russian contemporaries, but it did not free him from the severity of political critics in his own country; although *Rudin, On the Eve,* and *Fathers and Children* gave to his readers characters who lived and breathed the turbulent intellectual and political life of mid-nineteenth-century Russia; although Bazarov of *Fathers and Children* and Insarov of *On the Eve* were memorable portraits of the revolutionary hero; although Rudin was a recognized descendant of Eugen Onegin—they were not cut to political designs. More than that, Turgenev complicated critical discussion of his work by writing "The Diary of a Superfluous Man," who though he tells the story, is of the inarticulate company of the German music teacher in *A House of Gentlefolk* and the giant deaf-mute in "Moommoo." Yet it was a part of Turgenev's responsibility as a man, as a writer as well as artist, to see for the blind, to speak for those who could not talk; this responsibility, coupled with the perceptions of a poet, was the deepest root in his position as a political liberal; it provided fuel for his attacks on glib, office-seeking near-aristocrats, on the bureaucracy as well as against the cruelty of all who hold or seek power over others. All this of course transcended political and didactic readings of his short stories and novellas; the closing words of *A House of Gentlefolk* are appropriate footnotes to the intention of his art. Liza, one of the most glorious and certainly the most appealing of his heroines, is last seen by her lover walking through the cloisters of a convent. Neither speaks: "There are such moments in life," Turgenev wrote, "such feelings . . . One can but point to them —and pass on."

Turgenev's strength, like that of Alexander Blok, was concealed within the hidden resources of his memory, in the Proust-like recollections of past experience; that is why his two stories of adolescence, "First Love" and "The Watch" have an endurance beyond all other stories of their kind; taken together, the two stories explore the ranges of adolescent emotion: the awakening of sex, shame, pride, ambition, the discovery of lyrical beauty in the mere sense of being, and the wave of disillusionment that follows it.

It is this aspect of Turgenev's art, present also in *A Sportsman's*

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Notebook, which has had its indelible, if often well hidden and indirect, results within the shorter fiction of the twentieth century. Of these Hemingway's *In Our Time* is a notable example, and so are the best short stories of Sherwood Anderson who acknowledged his debt by reference to "the still, sad music of Turgenev." Less obvious are the echoes of Turgenev in Joyce's *Dubliners* which in all probability came to Joyce's eye and ear by way of George Moore's emulation of Turgenev in an Irish setting, stories translated into Gaelic and back into English, *The Untilled Field.* If this path of influence seems devious or too obscure for general recognition, it has the advantage of placing Turgenev closer to his true heirs, the writers of sensibility and feeling, the generation that included the names of Henry James, James Joyce, Proust and André Gide.

Horace Gregory

FICTION CHRONICLE

THE MIDNIGHT PATIENT. By Egon Hostovsky. Appleton-Century-Crofts. $3.00.
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TREE. By LeRoy Leatherman. Harcourt, Brace. $3.00.
THE HUGE SEASON. By Wright Morris. Viking. $3.50.
FEDERIGO, or THE POWER OF LOVE. By Howard Nemerov. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $3.00.
THE WICKED PAVILION. By Dawn Powell. Houghton, Mifflin. $3.50.
MY LIFE IN THE BUSH OF GHOSTS. By Amos Tutuola. Grove Press. $3.50.
SIDESTREET. By Robert O. Bowen. Knopf. $3.00.
THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE. By David Wagoner. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

There really ought to be a law against publishers' blurbs, particularly those on dust jackets which include encomiums from the great and the near-great. Who am I to contradict Lewis Mumford, Alfred Kazin, Malcolm Cowley, Graham Greene? Did these men really say all that about Mr. Hostovsky's novel—and if they said it, did they mean it? And if they said it and meant it, what am I to think? After all, I've read the book. Set it down as a psycho-thriller with pretensions to deep moral meaning and theme; the author's intention can never be doubted and as readers we are happy to give him all the credence we can, for the theme is a real and good one, viable for Conrad and many another fine writer. Yet in Mr. Hostovsky's hands it turns to dust and ashes, largely because the author cannot write and has not the novelist's

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imagination. It might be the part of prudence to point out that the novel is translated from the Czech and that whatever flaws one may find can be laid at the translator's door, but alas, such a happy delivery does not await me in this case. Mr. Hostovsky's intentions are as patently admirable as his good will is real. In short, the trouble lies in the artist's fundamental talent, discernible, I believe, in the case of a genuine novelist, through the fog of the worst translation. And although *The Midnight Patient* shows evidence of careful planning and plotting, it shows little else to its credit.

Briefly the story concerns a middle-aged psychiatrist, a Czech émigré in New York, who, in the process of first involving himself in, then extricating himself from, an elaborate mélange of espionage and counter-espionage, discovers that the single secret is still man and that spiritual regeneration, love, alone can save men and their world. I am sure we all agree with this notion and are happy that the hero, Dr. Arnost Malik, has been able to work out his destiny and feel human and forgiving at the last. The moral climate of our time, the stuff out of which Mr. Hostovsky wishes to make the fabric of his novel, has indeed many of the intemperate qualities that make the naked plot of the book seem highly probable. Again, we agree that the world is in a sorry state. But Mr. Hostovsky never shows it to us. He insists on telling us about the matter in the guise of his protagonist. Malik is never for an instant a real creature, like Kafka's unfortunate K, and the rest of the folk involved with Malik in this hot New York midsummer madness are less than wraiths; they talk at the reader and Malik talks back at them in the author's voice. As the plot moves toward its climax, one thinks, "Now at last he is coming to it. There *has* to be some revelation, some discovery that will transmute the whole." It never comes. The relationship between Alfons and Malik, certain we think to become a complex treatment of the "double," drops heavily into flat realism; the affair with Helen disappears; the provoking sketch of Malik's first marriage, instead of emerging as an increasingly potent motif, peters out into a mere psychiatristic device for pointing the moral if not adorning the tale.

And then there is the author's humor—at least I take it for an attempt at humor since Mr. Greene, on the dust jacket, says so. Artistically—that is, functionally—such humor as seems to be there is tasteless, gauche, and so stubbornly obtruded that one feels quite sure one has made a mistake. Though this ineptitude is serious enough, the total failure to create atmosphere and character is the most damaging of failures, and it would be unfair to detail it at length. Atmosphere

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is indispensable to such a novel; Mr. Greene should know that since he is a master of it. In this particular case, however, I was most forcibly reminded of Saul Bellow's *The Victim*. A reading of that after *The Midnight Patient* would do more than any criticism to show what I mean. Mr. Bellow is a writer—the real thing.

In a sense, as much should stand to Mr. Leatherman's credit. He is a writer, though as far as I can tell he has not yet found a subject. *The Other Side of the Tree* makes me uneasy with its vaguely evocative "sensitivity" somehow nowadays part of every Southern novel. Or do I merely imagine this? Jim Daigre, Mr. Leatherman's hero, is as sensitive as you please though the author has sufficient tact to thin out the laying-on of perceptions from time to time. Still and all, there are far too many "as ifs": "A gray rabbit hopped across with its long shadow, as slowly as if it were being dreamed about"; or, . . . "driving away in the buggy he had kept on glancing back, as if at a golden chariot . . ."; or, . . . "then she raised her arms and her fingers moved across her shoulders as if to feel the shadows on them. . . ." One wants to say, I don't believe it was as if it were that way at all. Yet such a device, such an excuse for metaphor, is fashionable and by no means wholly destructive; rather it is part of Mr. Leatherman's tendency to fine writing, to "poetic" style, to evoke or suggest so insistently that the reader finally doubts that the author is doing more than showing off his language. A fault in itself, this tendency involves Mr. Leatherman in a technical impasse: Ed Hatheway tells the tale of Miss Ida and the others, yet his idiom is the idiom of the author, or at least when it at rare moments seems to start to become Ed's, one flinches from the incongruity. The idiom cannot change because the story is by and about, and in the voice of, the author, by no means an inadmissable technique but a delicate, chancy one. Mr. Leatherman has to depend on his vocabulary, imagery and the three-dot punctuation-mark suggesting the inenarrable because he has not been able to contrive an action demanding both a muscular prose and varied characterization. His people are ciphers; his big scenes shadows on the cave's wall. The mandatory, the obligatory jobs remain undone—not shirked, because one feels Mr. Leatherman has talent and potential, but simply missed because the author did not know he had them to do. The symbolic rituals, the rites of initiation, the emblematic motifs like Blake's bones—all these are very well in their way, but I for one want to see some full-blooded people doing something of high significance and drama. What use is it to me to hear that "the past is held in eternal and lively suspension" when Mr. Leatherman simply gives me a couple of parallel situations and then

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embroiders them decoratively? This is not dense complexity though it may look like it.

Yet when all is said and done, I find here serious artistry at work on artistic material; the author goes about his business with the air of a man who knows that it is a hard job and that there are far too many phases of it, all important, to encourage breezy self-confidence. *The Other Side of the Tree* is not a successful novel but it augurs well for the future.

Mr. Morris' new novel begins auspiciously with a strong evocation of atmosphere and a promise of exciting events to come. The reader feels that here is a real attempt to explore the secret, the power, of those fabulous men of the '20s he has read and heard so much about. One of the first pictures Mr. Morris limns is the shadowy one of a figure before a Congressional investigating committee, a figure who will become, one is made to feel sure, of crucial importance. One cannot help asking Who is he? was he a Communist? why? what has happened in the past that must work itself out thus and set this man before us with the TV cameras on him? I for one found that though Mr. Morris raised these questions and many others like them, he never really answered them, and not because the questions were explored so excitingly as to render answers superfluous; no, I felt cheated. Mr. Morris went about in his book seeming to tell me he was going to give me answers—good, pungent, longed-for answers. I never got them.

The failure, I think, derives from two weaknesses: stylistic and structural. The author speaks in two voices in alternating chapters, the one being that of the protagonist, Foley, and the other that of the effaced narrator telling about what happened on that crucial day in Foley's life. I do not think Mr. Morris ever brings these two disparate methods together, with the result that Peter Foley remains a device rather than a person, and the other characters (all of whom are associated with Foley) are hopelessly split: what they were is no clue to what they are. Mr. Morris cannot bring the past and present together and his technique simply drives them farther apart. As for the style, there are further devices and techniques which irritated me: the early-Auden technique of omitting all articles, for no reason that I could discover, and the tendency to lapse into a Fearing-esque ironic catalogue of urban and suburban materialistic fetishes. Finally, the over-clever talk of some of the characters, notably Dickie, palls after a while. I think Mr. Morris defeats his purpose here, just as he does in his over-use of symbolism.

I believe Mr. Morris has failed in this novel because he attempted

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a big job without sufficient attention to the main task involved: that of really showing the how and the why of a man like Lawrence or Dickie or Proctor. He has been too hasty and counted on style, evocation and symbolism to do that which only patient thought, imagination and analysis can do.

To turn to *Federigo* from *The Huge Season* is to enter another domain of fiction, for if Mr. Morris has taken a large theme and a complex subject, Mr. Nemerov has tried to make little ones out of big ones—and in my opinion has succeeded very nicely. It is not a great book and I am sure the author did not intend it as such. With all possible temptations to be arch, literary, and smart-aleck, Mr. Nemerov has given a neat, sardonic account of love among the not-so-young of New York advertising-cum-Longchamps circles. Julian Ghent is at once a sympathetic (I am just his age) figure and a figure of fun, as indeed are his wife and one or two others. The young are heartless—amusingly so; indeed, amusing may be the only appropriate adjective for the novel. Mr. Nemerov hints at the prototypes for some of his characters, gives us an interesting *doppelganger,* takes us to one or two diverting parties, and winds things up with a very fine twist on the old gimmick of the lady and the chambermaid. It is all well done and great fun. If the author has by no means set himself the task that Mr. Morris has, nonetheless what was needed got itself done and nicely so.

The locale of Miss Powell's novel is also New York, more specifically Bohemian New York; the focal point for the scènes de la vie de Bohème, the Café Julien. What puzzles the reader most is—why? Miss Powell brings together her many characters, sends them away, shows us painters, a nymphomaniac, a phony publisher, "sales types" of sundry sorts, and it all seems to amount to nothing much. The tone is unremittingly arch, the wit discursive, the plot attenuated. Presumably we have here a "wicked" clinical study of certain deracinated urban characters who frequent a certain café in order to find a home. Miss Powell seems to be attempting to show that the unexpected continually occurs and that what a person intends he rarely does. None of it seems to make much difference, since the folk involved have no size or shape, nor is their world in any way compelling. The various liaisons are picked up, dropped, picked up again, and finally—simply left, some in a state of irresolution, others perhaps potentially soluble had Miss Powell created a solvent. Again, it seems scarcely to matter. A kind of epigrammatic style, a caustic comment in the manner of Waugh seems to have been Miss Powell's goal. Once the reader sees clearly that she cannot attain to it, he, like the author, loses interest.

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Mr. Tutuola comes to us highly touted; his book is supposed to be "primitive" (whatever that may be), subliminally disturbing, violent. I suppose it is just barely possible that *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* might make a convinced Jungian shriek and clasp his hands in ecstasy; I thought it was either an elaborate leg-pull or a piece of wholly misguided experimentation. Chiefly, the book is dull. When we have had one of Mr. Tutuola's ghosts, we have had them all. There is nothing of the legendary, the suggestively symbolic in the behavior of these spooks, nor can I for one find freshness in the curious style, which I must say I find absurd, inept, self-consciously cute. This, I daresay, is the source of much of the talk about the author's "naiveté." In my opinion, he is no more naif than Grandma Moses; he knows a good thing when he sees one, as he tells us in his final sentence, to the effect that there is a lot more where this came from. I can well believe it. For all the sententious comment to the effect that this book is right in there with *Alice in Wonderland,* Grimm, etc., etc., one shattering deficiency strikes the sensibility at once: the author hasn't the faintest idea of what he's talking about; he just knows that the publishers will buy it. To that extent Mr. Tutuola may be considered a "primitive"; some people seem to like the stuff and why not give them what they want? The author has no art, nor do unconscious, racial images emerge strikingly and compel interest. The book just goes along, a bald narrative of the preposterous.

But it is useless to argue such matters; some people will like the book in any case. In a wholly different way, some may insist on liking Mr. Bowen's *Sidestreet.* To one who has read the author's *The Weight of the Cross* and *Bamboo,* this third novel comes as a considerable disappointment. For all the ineptitudes of style the former novels contained, for all their crude introspection, they had a somber power altogether unusual in a young writer. The first named novel in particular seems to me to retain its vital force long after most of the successful war novels have been seen for what they are. Yet *Sidestreet* seems to me to isolate and dwell upon those areas of Mr. Bowen's preoccupation which were least rewarding in his prior work; the drab, vicious anonymity and perversion of lower-middle class family life in an eastern city. The author's attempt at psychological-cum-environmental determination in *Bamboo* is the least cogent part of that novel; in this latest book it is the whole work, and I have to say that the author fails.

True, Mr. Bowen has learned a lot. The style is smoother, the vocabulary both more elaborate and more precisely used. The note of self-pity that occasionally mars the earlier work is here rigorously ex-

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cluded; Mr. Bowen has objectified his theme and his characters. Yet hatred comes through, really the only genuine emotion that I detected. The story tells of Edna Roberts, her marriage to William Gavin, her actual murder of her husband and the psychical murder of their son. Unremittingly grim in tone, action and theme, the novel can never make of its material more than a controlled hymn of hate for Edna. Mr. Bowen at no point tells us what or how to think; he simply takes us deeper and deeper into the evil of Edna's career. Why? to what end? I think the author wishes to say that certain women are like Edna, and that granted a few such women, their husbands and children are likely to have a thin time of it. For all the control, the self-restraint he exercises, Mr. Bowen cannot make his book come alive; he can merely keep it from becoming anguished. And this is a pity, for clearly Robert O. Bowen is a genuine novelist. What he lacks is a subject to take the place of the one he apparently feels he exhausted in his first two books.

Promise has to be the final word in the case of Mr. Wagoner—perhaps high promise—I am not sure. In any case, the opening pages of *The Man in the Middle* caught me up and carried me well past the point at which Mr. Wagoner lost his way and mine. I kept going in the hope that we would both find the right track. What began as a

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realistic, suggestive, nightmarish drama finally ends in loose allegory, or so I construed it. What the novel is about seems to be that old business of the modern little man caught between forces he can neither fight nor understand. Charlie Bell, the near-middle-aged crossing tender, finds himself involved in murder, political shenanigans, and subsequent flight and pursuit. None of it is his doing. He knows, finally, nothing at all—who is chasing whom and why is a question that he at last ceases to ask. Mr. Wagoner apparently wants to suggest the horror of Charlie Bell's position and the horror of modern urban life. At first he does so with remarkable success. After he has rung a good many changes on this theme, however, interest begins to fail. The final portion of the book—the mad, macabre flight with Ada—takes us into a world of symbol and allegory and loses us there. Nonetheless, this is an auspicious beginning of Mr. Wagoner's. He has a good, muscular style, a sense of place and things as well as of people. Both he and Mr. Bowen have talent; more than that, they have access to a world.

Louis O. Coxe

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VARIETY

Ignazio Silone

SELF-PORTRAIT IN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Why do you write?
To communicate with others.
What sort of readers do you have most in mind when you write?
Individual men and women given to thinking for themselves—restless spirits.
What do you think your books can give them?
A little companionship.
And to the chance reader?
A flea in the ear.
What do you think of critics?
It's a big world; there's room for everyone.
What influence has criticism had on your writing?
Absolutely none.
Your favorite novelists?
Cervantes, Tolstoy, Verga.
Your favorite modern painter?
Rouault.
If you weren't a writer, what would you like to be?
A miller.
What do you like doing in your spare time?
Reading and talking.
Do you ever think of returning to active politics?
If freedom were in danger, yes.
What gift of Nature do you most desire?
Health.
Who, of the people you have met, have been most important to you?
A few simple people; among the well-known, Don Orione, Gramsci, Trotsky, Ragaz.[1]
What characters in Italian history do you find most stimulating?
Joachim da Fiore, Francis of Assisi, Thomas Campanella.
What contemporary character?
Simone Weil.
What do you consider the most important date in world history?
December 25 of the year 0.
And of recent times?
The workers' revolt in Eastern Germany on June 17, 1953.
What do you think about the third world war?
It would prepare the way for the fourth.
Among military heroes, whom do you most admire?
Joshua, when he stopped the sun, and the good soldier Schweik.
Do you believe progress to be inevitable?
No.
Do you believe that man is free?
I think man can be free.

1 *Don Luigi Orione*: a Catholic priest who founded the "Order of Divine Providence," and whom Silone knew in boyhood. *Antonio Gramsci*: one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party and its chief intellectual exponent. He died in a Fascist jail. *Leonhard Ragaz*: former Protestant minister and professor of theology in Zurich University, who inspired and fostered the Christian-Socialist movement in Central Europe. Silone met him during his years of exile in Switzerland.

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Do you think man is responsible for his actions?

As far as he is free, yes.

Do you think man can overcome his destiny?

Yes, if he accepts it.

What do you think about suicide?

It is one of the many things that I cannot understand.

Do you believe in the possibility of a perfect political order?

No.

Or in the possibility of perfect laws, institutions, authority?

No.

In a Christian State?

No; it would be a contradiction in terms.

In a Christian society?

That alone would be a Christian society in which love replaced the law.

What do you mean by socialist revolution?

The elimination of the economic and social obstacles which at present impede human freedom.

Do you think it will bring happiness to mankind?

Not necessarily. Old troubles will linger on and new ones will develop.

Do you think freedom can survive in a socialist country?

In the age of monopolies, I think that without a certain number of socialist measures, freedom is impossible.

As in Russia?

In Russia there is no socialism, but its opposite—State capitalism; no freedom, but its opposite.

Do you think the educated classes have a leading part to play in society?

No.

Do you agree with the maxim "You can't go wrong if you always follow the working class"?

As a compass it has lost its usefulness. The working class is not going in any one direction.

But on the whole, can it not be said to tend in one direction?

Its direction varies from one country to another, from Labour to Social-Democrat to Communist to Titoist to Syndicalist to Peronist and so on. To say that one should always follow it, is meaningless.

Are proletarian organizations, when free from external pressure, not spontaneously progressive?

Not spontaneously.

What ultimately decides the real nature of these organizations?

The conscience of their members and their leaders.

Are you a pessimist?

No.

Have you confidence in man?

I have confidence in the man who accepts suffering and transforms it into truth and moral courage. And so now I think that out of the terrible polar night of the Siberian slave labor camps, Someone may come who will restore sight to the blind.

Someone? Who?

His name does not matter.

Rome, 1954

(*Translated by Darina Silone*)

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CORRESPONDENCE

EMPSON, ADAMS, AND MILTON

SIRS:

I hope it is not too late to offer some comments on the article by R. M. Adams in your March-April number, about my essay on Milton and Bentley.

No doubt he is right in finding so many copying errors; I wish I had known about them before the second edition, when the type was cast. I copied out my Bentley and Pearce quotations in the British Museum and wrote the essay in Tokyo; certainly I ought to have remembered to check them later on, when I could. But I do not see that the mistakes he quotes make much difference. Indeed, this idea of checking your quotations as an absolute duty is fairly recent, and not always relevant; for instance Hazlitt habitually quoted from memory, and commonly a bit wrong, but he was writing very good criticism. When I was building an argument on a detail of the text I would be keen on getting the detail right while I was looking at it, but not otherwise. I hope this does not sound insolently casual; actually, I have to put an absurd amount of time into trying to write decent prose, so that the reader can get the point without bother, whereas Hazlitt apparently could do it at his first shot. What I do submit is that a critic is spending his time better if he does that than if he struggles for the degree of accuracy which is rightly expected from a textual editor.

What is more serious about Mr. Adams' article is the claim that I was giving a harmful account of *Paradise Lost,* actually spoiling the poem for my more trustful readers; by the "chaotic uniformity of my responses," "treating a giraffe as a rabbit oddly botched in the making," and so on. But I wasn't telling anybody how to read it, except on the one issue about "pastoral" where Mr. Adams appears to agree with me. By the way, I can't see why there is any separate problem about Imagery in Epics, though of course I agree in general that an author shouldn't be saddled with meanings that are irrelevant to his style and purpose; only you must call it bad writing if they thrust themselves in. I agree that the quaint bits of animus against women, which the Bentley treatment makes prominent, are rather deflating to the poem, and perhaps I made too much fuss about them; but a reader ought not to have to protect his innocence from seeing the lapses of Milton. In the poem as a whole, these bits of nagging are swept aside by the tremendous speech of appeal from Eve to Adam which saves the situation of mankind. But it is not only that one feels they were in the mind of Milton; historically they are part of the movement away from medieval ideas such as chivalry; and one needs I think to appreciate *Paradise Lost* as a monumental summing-up of the way the mind of Europe was going, Counter-Reformation as well as Reformation. Something has obviously gone very wrong with Milton's God, too, but he didn't invent that either; the human mind is splendid but appalling, and what you are getting here is a massive specimen of one of the ways it can go. The poem needs I think to be regarded rather like Aztec or Benin sculpture, invigorating as well as marvelous but clearly produced by a sickening ideology and social practice. I did not say this in my essay, partly because I was concerned with something else, but also because it has been obvious ever since it was said by Blake and Shelley. Nowadays we get these Neo critics, who apparently demand that you must sink your self totally in the art-work when viewing it. I would say that my approach is more "total" than Mr. Adams', not less as he implies; you need to see both sides of the thing; it is out of place to feel a tender regret for the imperial but appalling court of Benin.

Also I don't think I need have been blamed, at the end of his article, for suggesting that Milton (in his turn)

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had merely "a simple regret for Elizabethan hey-nonny-nonny" rather than for a dignity which was more remote. Considering that this hey-nonny-nonny included the plays of Shakespeare, and that Milton's party had closed the theaters, it doesn't seem out of place to remark that his direct experience gave him something to go on for the weird deep melancholy with which he continually clashes together the loss of Eden and of the pagan world.

William Empson

BUT IS IT PORNOGRAPHY?

SIRS:

I have read "Pull Down Vanity!" by Leslie A. Fiedler in the July-August issue of your magazine with such disgust that I am impelled to express my indignation in writing. I had hoped that Mary McCarthy's "Dottie Makes an Honest Woman of Herself" [Jan.-Feb. 1954] might mark the nadir in PARTISAN REVIEW fiction.

Why do presumably intelligent and talented writers prostitute that talent and why does a magazine like the PARTISAN REVIEW devote so much space to such fiction? Is it done with the intent to seem daring and advanced? The achievement seems quite on the level of the vilest pornography. Who the readers, what the end to which you are directing such fiction?

Quite a number of your readers would be interested in a defense of this policy.

New York, N. Y. **I. Louise Ligo**

SIRS:

Some of the policies of your radical periodical, which I have taken and read for a number of years, used to puzzle and bother me. Were you not afraid of Comstockism, of Puritanism, of Pecksniffism, and have no attempts been made to prosecute or intimidate you? Have not charges of pornography been leveled at you? And what is your real attitude toward anti-Semitism, still rampant and aggressive in this land of the (once) free and independent people proud of their Americanism?

Today I fancy I comprehend your basic ideas. An avant-garde review cannot afford to respect unduly irrational prejudices and outworn conventions in any sphere. Life is what it is, and a little realism is not offensive to civilized taste. Sex is not shameful, and language cannot be too genteel, too old-maidish, too euphemistic. Vulgarity, in small doses, is tonic and bracing.

After reading Mary McCarthy, Leslie A. Fiedler, and other contributors, I feel certain I have the right explanation of your course. The same applies to anti-Semitism—you don't hesitate to confront that relic of barbarism in various ways, negative and positive. Evasion and silence never advance problems toward intelligent solutions.

La Jolla, Calif. **Victor S. Yarros**

It seems to us that Mr. Yarros has given very good reasons for our having printed the two stories in question, and that his letter may serve as an answer to Miss Ligo's objections.—THE EDITORS

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